

High and Low Involvement:  
An Exploration of Ethical Product Decisions

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## **Abstract**

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Keywords: consumer behaviour, decision making, conscious consumption, ethical, involvement, farmers' market

### **Purpose**

Ethical elaboration is an aspect of product involvement and this research examines the relationship between involvement and ethical consumption providing a more holistic understanding of ethical decision-making. This paper identifies antecedents of both low and high involvement ethical product decision-making at farmers' markets, and with sustainable and energy efficient features in the housing market, respectively.

### **Design/methodology/approach**

These aims are achieved through semi-structured and in-depth interviews with consumers and sellers of ethical products across low and high involvement domains.

### **Findings**

The empirical investigation reveals new insights into the constructs considered when purchasing high involvement ethical products. Barriers are discussed and findings examine the relationships between trust, information, ethical motivation and signalling.

### **Research implications**

A research process framework for the study of ethical decision-making is presented, demonstrating that constructs are approached differently between involvement levels. A conceptual model providing steps for transferring knowledge gained from the research to practice is also developed.

### **Practical implications**

This research aids in the dispersion of information among stakeholders so that sustainability and energy efficiency can be part of the standard real estate conversation.

**Social implications**

Sustainability and energy efficiency (SEE) housing is seen as a niche market and this research will help alter the behaviour of the stakeholders in order to incentivise consumers to change their purchase patterns to include SEE features.

**Originality/value**

Most of the work on ethical consumption deals with low-involvement products. This study addresses high-involvement ethical consumption within the housing market through a qualitative approach.

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## **Chapter 1**

### **1.1 Introduction**

Nowadays a consumer cannot walk into a store without facing a plethora of brands all boasting their ethical features and sustainable contributions from ethical product attributes to social causes that the brands support. Sustainable consumption has rapidly grown over the last two decades and similarly, sustainable consumption research has become a burgeoning area of interest to researchers. More ethical or sustainable choices are entering consumer consciousness (Cherrier & Murray, 2002; Shaw et al., 2005) and an important focus within consumer research is on understanding why those choices are made (McEachern et al., 2010). Ethical consumption decision-making literature has focused on items that consumers purchase with a number of sustainable features: fair trade, no child labour, not tested on animals, locally grown, organic, chemical free, environmentally friendly, etcetera. Routinized items and items that require limited additional information have been studied within this domain (low involvement). Unfamiliar items that require extended problem solving due to higher financial risk or social risk have not been studied within this domain (high involvement). The proposed research contributes to the literature by providing insight into the ethical consumption decision-making process through the study and comparison of both routinised products (low involvement) and extended problem-solving products (high involvement).

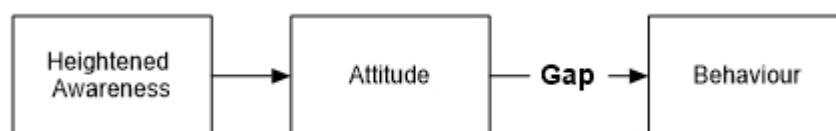
Current definitions have stated sustainable consumption as, “consumption that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” (World Economic Forum, 2013). The notion that consumers have a positive attitude towards environmental protection is common in the literature. (Arvola et al., 2008; Ellen et al., 2006; Liu et al., 2012; Vermeir & Verbeke, 2006). Studies have shown that consumers are demanding green products from companies (Brockman et al., 2009; Schmeltz, 2012). However, what is also common in the literature is the concept of an attitude-behaviour gap. Some articles report that although consumers (approximately 30%) are very concerned about ethical or environmental issues, they struggle to translate these concerns into purchases

(Cowe & Williams, 2000; Young et al., 2010). Regardless of their concerns, there has not been an increase in market share of ethical or green products

with some articles reporting that these products have remained confined to just 1-3% of the entire market (Bray et al., 2011). The attitude-behaviour gap is prevalent in the field of sustainable consumption (Carrington et al., 2010; McEachern et al., 2010; Shaw et al., 2005; Vermeir & Verbeke, 2006). Even though the attitude-behaviour gap is widely recognized and discussed, it endures. Researchers have spent most of their energy lamenting the gap and attempting to account for why it exists.

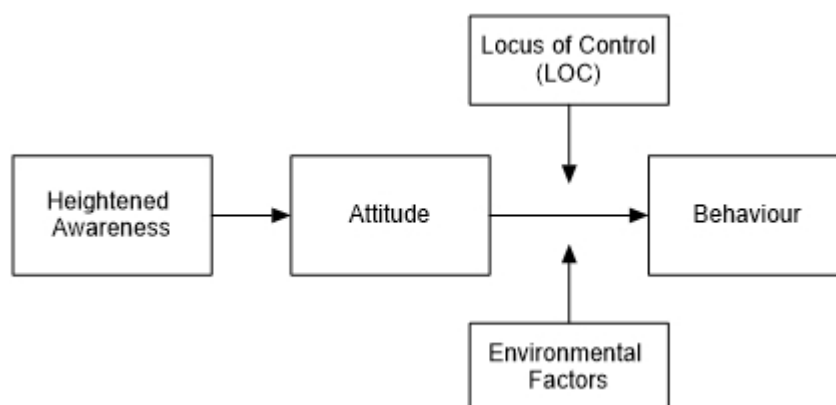
The following figure provides a basic conceptualized model of the attitude behaviour gap that is commonly found in the ethical decision-making literature.

*Figure 1. Intention-Behaviour Gap*



The following figure expands on this conceptual model by adding constructs that have been grouped for simplicity into either Locus of Control (Motivation, Values, etcetera) or Environmental Factors (Price, Messaging, Information, etcetera). These constructs moderate the attitude-behaviour gap.

*Figure 2. Moderating Constructs of the Intention-Behaviour Gap*



Constructs that have been identified within the ethical consumption literature have focused on low involvement products, such as fair trade coffee, local and pesticide free produce, etcetera. Studies within the consumer behaviour literature show involvement as having considerable influence over the decision-making process (Kapferer & Laurent, 1985). However, the consumption process for high involvement ethical products has not been widely researched. This research provides new insights into the attitude-behaviour gap through the comparison of constructs between ethical decision-making of both low and high involvement products.

Conscious consumers are considered to be a valuable group that exhibit a complex mix of behaviours (Szmigin et al., 2009). These consumers elaborate on ethical constructs in the decision-making process. The current ethical consumption low-involvement product literature has identified forces that impact ethical decision-making and the current research identifies forces that impact the conscious decision-making process with high involvement products. Conscious consumers prefer to purchase products with socially responsible attributes and this research also explores this with high involvement products. The broad theoretical contribution helps to bridge the attitude-behaviour gap through the insights gained by this study.

## **1.2 Purpose of the Study**

Buying decisions vary from routinised decisions that are low in consumer involvement to unfamiliar decisions that require more extensive thought and are high in consumer involvement. This research examines the constructs between these two levels of product involvement, buying a house with sustainable and energy efficient features (high involvement) and buying produce at the farmers' market with sustainable features (low involvement). It achieves this by looking at the intention expressed and the behaviour manifested by participants through ethical consumption events and shopping activities they participate in, and how meaning is constructed through these experiences. In doing so, this work also aims to understand the relationship

between involvement and consumption and to identify and compare the antecedents of high and low involvement decisions. This comparison of constructs will provide insight into the ethical consumption attitude-behaviour gap through the comparison of constructs between both high involvement (housing) and low involvement (produce) ethical products.

### **1.3 Ethical Consumption Low Involvement and High Involvement Product Domains**

Past literature on ethical consumption decision-making has primarily focused on low involvement products. The location for collecting research for these studies has often taken place at farmers' markets as they have been identified as a location with several low involvement ethical product offerings. Similarly, consumers who shop at these markets have been identified as conscious consumers, who consider ethical constructs when purchasing routinised products (Szmigin et al., 2009). A common theme throughout this paper focuses on the need to also study high involvement ethical products. The following describes and contextualises the established low involvement product domain (The Farmers' Market) as well as introduce a burgeoning high involvement product domain (Sustainable and Energy Efficient Housing Market).

#### **1.3.1 *The Farmers' Market***

"In the Market is life, vitality, health, abundance, grit, prime produce, colour. In Markets lie the thick of things, sociability, the throb of human community. They provide links with the past and all indications suggest that Farmers' Market networks will create far-reaching and revolutionary changes in the ways we show and eat -alterations that will affect agriculture's future" (Chorney, 2002, p. 8).

In the province of Ontario, Canada there is a lot of interest and allure to farmers' markets, and they are increasingly positioned as a means to move towards more sustainable and localised food systems (Feagan et al., 2004; Kirwan, 2004). Farmers' markets are seen as the oldest and most common

form of direct marketing, and are appreciated for their short food chain that brings both food producers and consumers closer together (Feagan et al., 2004; Kirwan, 2004).

A considerable amount of research into understanding ethical shopping behaviour takes place at farmers' markets as the shopping location is viewed as a place where an abundance of sustainable consumables is available. Research questions tend to focus on ethical influences that result in buying behaviour (Szmigin et al., 2009; McEachern et al., 2010). The farmers' market is considered to be a place where consumers with a high level of ethical elaboration shop and past research looking to bridge the attitude-behaviour gap within ethical decision-making have often taken place at farmers' markets due to the high availability of this type of 'conscious' consumer. The 'conscious' consumer is committed to buying local produce and supporting local food vendors (McEachern et al., 2010). Even though ethical elaboration is high, the products are routinised/low-risk products and tend to be low in involvement. As a result, ethical decision-making research has focused on low involvement or routinised products.

### ***1.3.2 Sustainable and Energy Efficient Houses***

While considered a luxury fifty years ago, a home purchase today would never be completed without enquiring about the presence of central air conditioning. The same market shift is happening right now regarding sustainable and energy efficient homes, but this time we cannot afford to wait several decades for it to become part of the conversation.

Sustainability and energy efficiency (SEE) is on the forefront of people's minds and agendas, across the globe. This is an issue of particular importance to Canadians, as they rank in the top ten percent of per capita carbon footprint size and top five percent of per capita energy usage (Google Public Data, 2014). Canada also has the dubious honour of creating the most waste per capita of all countries, at 777 kilograms per person annually (The Conference Board of Canada, 2008). This metric has been steadily worsening for 20 years, with Canada surpassing the U.S. for the top position in 2002. Given the

severity of these metrics, it is understandable why SEE is an area of critical importance for Canadians.

While the consumption gluttony of North America is a well-known fact, what is less widely understood is the substantial role real estate plays. Evidence indicates that buildings are the largest energy-using sector, consuming 43 percent of all energy (National Trust for Historic Preservation, 2011) and over 70 percent of electricity (Department of Energy, 2011). Additionally, real estate construction is responsible for 38 percent of all carbon dioxide emissions (Energy Information Administration, 2008).

The primary benefits of SEE homes are threefold. First, they provide the user of the space with decreased operating costs, as SEE homes use less energy. This both provides greater cash flow to the household now, as well as protects the space user from future energy price increases. Second, SEE space is healthier than a traditionally-constructed space. This is primarily experienced through the use of healthier building materials such as low and non-volatile organic compound (VOC) paints and flooring, etcetera. Therefore, the indoor air quality in a SEE space is often much better. Third, SEE homes have a much smaller ecological footprint, emitting fewer greenhouse gases, conserving resources, and reducing many types of pollution. This final benefit accrues not only to the space user but also to the world as a whole. The benefits this movement brings to the economy, society and the environment are clear. However, insight into the consumer decision-making process are not, nor are the understandings of the constructs that impact these consumers buying behaviour. This research provides new insights into the decision-making process of high involvement sustainable homes.

Real estate literature often explores the decision-making influences through the power relationship between the buyer and the seller. Power within the literature has been defined as, “the ability of an actor to influence another to act in the manner that they would not have otherwise” (Emerson, 1962 p. 32). Brokers and Sales Representatives are highly influential in the home purchasing process (Zumpano et al., 1996). Homebuyers who acquire their



house through a broker do not purchase just a house –they also obtain the services of the broker (Zumpano et al., 1996). In other words, these buyers are not consuming based on a singular trait but rather consuming a bundled product (Zumpano et al., 1996). Similarly, recent purchasing research has found that the origins of power in buyer-seller relationships has been explored too narrowly and that power is instead part of the same broad, pluralistic construct (Meehan & Wright, 2012). This research aims to gain insights into the influences that buyer-seller relationships have in the SEE home purchasing process.

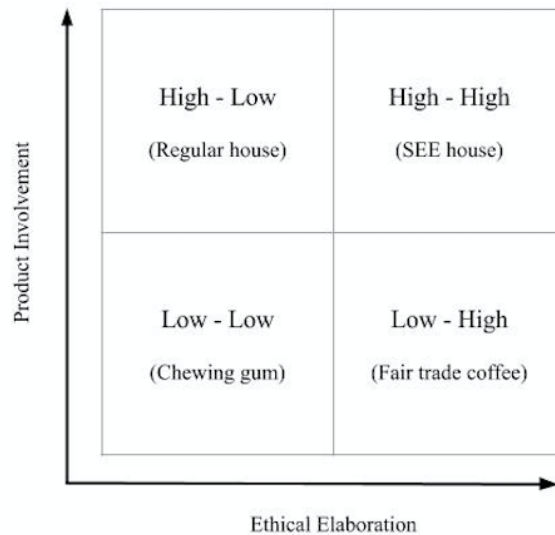
This research exists at the unique intersection of SEE content and qualitative methodology. While little work has been done here to date, none has been done on real estate. More specifically, little to no research exists addressing SEE and high involvement goods, of which homes are often regarded the highest involvement. This research adds an important cornerstone to the new SEE real estate consumer behaviour literature in addition to providing insight to the ethical behaviour consumption gap. The consumption process for high involvement ethical choices, for example, a sustainable and energy efficient home (SEE), has not been widely researched. This research advances the SEE body of literature by drawing on the current ethical low-involvement decision-making literature and buyer-seller relationship real estate literature while exploring this new emerging home sub-category.

#### **1.4 Gap**

Since consumers process information differently based on the level of product involvement, research that has focused on low involvement ethical products should not be generalised to ethical products that are high involvement. Ethical elaboration is an aspect of product involvement, and research should take into account the consumers' ethical elaboration of products of all levels of involvement. What is missing from the ethical decision-making literature is an analysis of high involvement products. Studying low and also high ethical product involvement will provide insight into this decision-making process. The following figure conceptualises this in the Ethical Elaboration and Product Involvement Framework (EEPIF). The ethical decision-making literature has

focused on the lower right quadrant, and the current research studies both the lower right and upper right quadrants and compare the findings.

*Figure 3. Ethical Elaboration and Product Involvement Framework (EEPIF)*



### 1.5 Theoretical Contributions

This research explores the nature of the attitude-behaviour gap in ethical product decision making; more specifically, how high involvement ethical decisions differ from low involvement ethical decisions. It achieves this by looking at the intention (aims, plans, goals) expressed and the behaviour (practices, activities, and performances) manifested by participants through physical events and activities they participate in, and how meaning is constructed through these experiences. In doing so, this work also aids in understanding the relationship between involvement and consumption and identifies and compares the antecedents of high and low involvement decisions. This comparison of constructs provides insight into the ethical consumption attitude-behaviour gap through the comparison of constructs of both high involvement (housing) and low involvement (produce) ethical products. As previously mentioned, the literature has identified forces that impact the ethical decision-making process of low involvement products. The current research builds on this through identifying forces that impact the ethical decision-making process of high involvement products. In addition to the

above mentioned theoretical contributions, this research contributes to the existing but small SEE real estate conversation.

The following provides a condensed overview of the aim, research objectives and the corresponding research questions.

### **1.5.1 Research Aim**

The aim of this research is to explore the nature of the attitude-behaviour gap in low involvement and high involvement ethical consumer decisions.

### **1.5.2 Research Objectives**

- To explore how high involvement ethical decisions differ from low involvement ethical decisions
- To identify and compare the antecedents of low and high involvement decisions
- To understand the relationship between involvement and consumption
- To explore the gap between attitudes and behaviour

### **1.5.3 Research Questions**

- To what extent does ethical decision-making of low involvement products differ from ethical decision-making of high involvement products?
- In what ways do antecedents differ between high involvement and low involvement ethical products?
- What is the relationship between involvement and ethical consumption?

## **1.6 The Structure of the Thesis**

This thesis is composed of five chapters. Each chapter is constructed as follows:

**Chapter 1** discusses the topic of ethical decision-making and provides a rationale into the importance of researching this domain. It then discusses what has been studied thus far and the persistence of the attitude-behaviour

gap that is identified throughout the literature. A conceptual framework is introduced which provides insight into this gap by highlighting the importance of different levels of ethical involvement in decision-making. This chapter then defines and describes ethical consumers and the domains in which they shop. This is followed by a discussion of the commonly researched ethical consumption low involvement domain and an introduction to the high involvement ethical consumption domain that will be explored in this research. The purpose of the study is discussed with a focus on describing the overall aims, objectives and research questions for this paper. A chapter summary outlining the structure of this thesis concludes this section.

In **Chapter 2**, the various approaches that have been taken by ethical decision-making researchers are reviewed, with particular attention to the ethical decision-making process and the notable theories that have been drawn on throughout the literature that shape our understanding of decision making. It also identifies and discusses the constructs that influence the decision-making process and defines terminology used to describe the ethical consumer. This chapter then addresses the contributions within the realm of ethical decision-making and demonstrates the parallels that exist in the involvement literature and ethical decision-making literature. It concludes with a description of the significant theoretical underpinnings and constructs establishing that ethical decision-making research has been predominantly focused on the low involvement domain.

In **Chapter 3** the methodological strategy of this thesis is presented and justified establishing a general approach to how one can reasonably satisfy the requirements of research questions. This section begins with an overview of the research objectives followed by an explanation of the research questions and chosen methodology. An important area of enquiry then takes place with a methodological debate of the philosophical assumptions and theoretical positions of the methodologies, including their ontological and epistemological underpinnings. This is followed by a discussion of two qualitative research methodologies, phenomenology and interviewing, and

their interpretive paradigms. Next, the identification of the study participants and the process of conducting field work, data collection methods and analysis are included. Ethical issues and methodological implications are examined throughout.

The research procedures that would ultimately shape the final research objectives and questions in the main study are then discussed. This section presents two phases of research encompassing four studies. A sequential research design was employed to allow the inductive Phase 1 Exploratory Studies to inform the development of the subsequent Phase 2 Main Studies. Different levels of involvement in ethical decision-making are explored through the Ethical Elaboration and Product Involvement Framework. The procedures for Study 1 (Phase 1 Exploratory) and Study 3 (Phase 2 Main) are described, these examined the decision-making process of low involvement products at farmers' markets through qualitative enquiry involving semi-structured interviews as well as survey questionnaires during the exploratory phase followed by in-depth interview for the main. Similarly, the procedures for Study 2 (Phase 1 Exploratory) and Study 4 (Phase 2 Main) are described, these examined the decision-making process of high involvement products through semi-structured and in-depth interviews.

**Chapter 4** discusses the corresponding findings from Phase 1 Exploratory Studies and also Phase 2 Main Studies. From Phase 1 new construct insights emerged that differed from those found in the low involvement literature. The findings also suggest that socially conscious consumers when purchasing high involvement ethical products also consider factors beyond those identified in the literature of low involvement products. This exploratory research procedure (Study 1 and Study 2) revealed common themes and areas of enquiry that would shape the research questions and objectives for this thesis. These insights informed the Phase 2 Main Studies. The main research findings are then discussed. The decision-making process of low involvement ethical products, as well as high involvement ethical products, is examined through two qualitative studies conducted through in depth interviews Study 3 and Study 4. Conceptual frameworks that capture the research procedure as

well as provide a visual to the comparison and contrast of antecedent constructs are also presented.

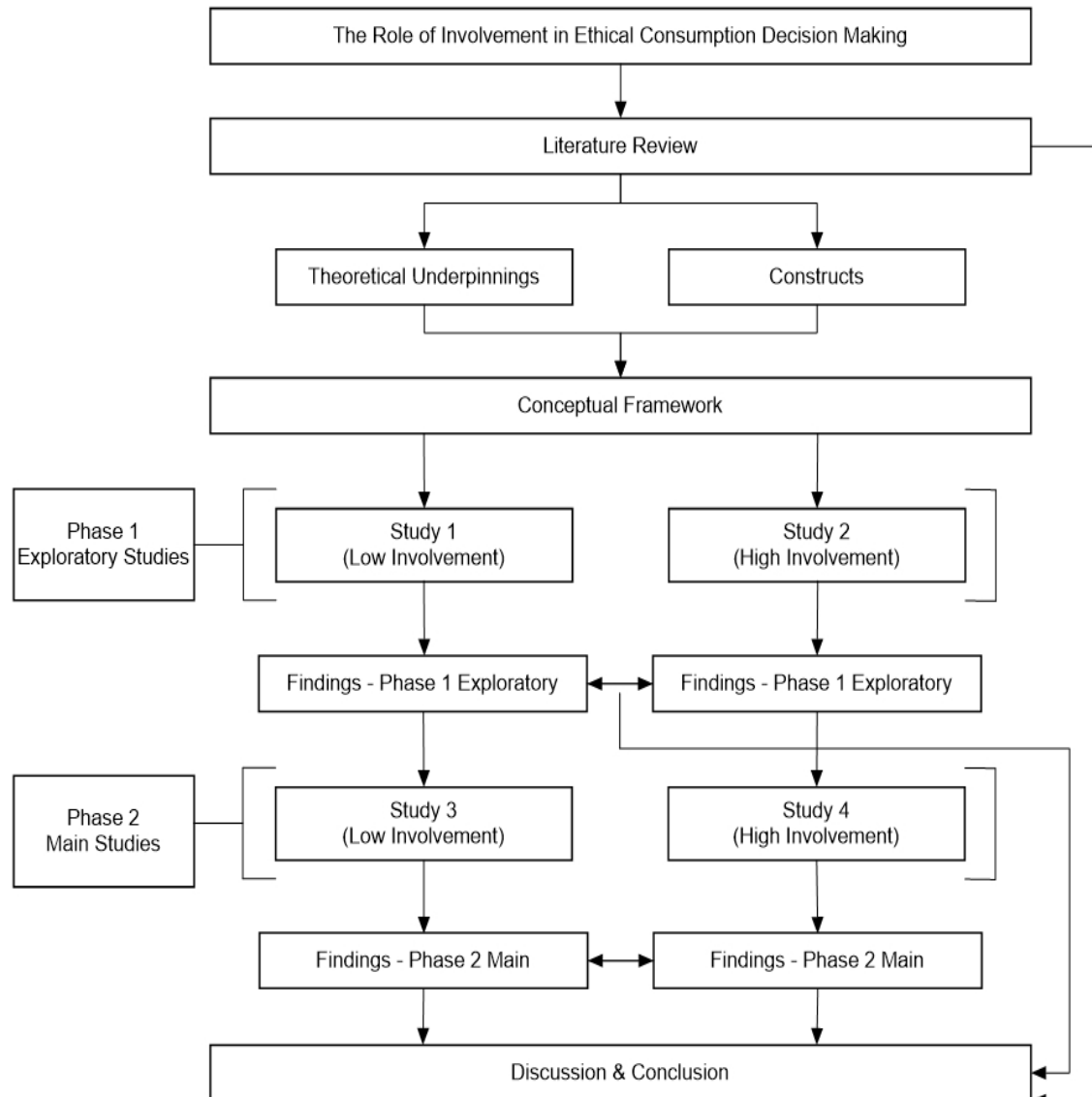
Past experiences, preconceived notions and existing potential biases of the researcher are bracketed and their identified existing influences that could impact their interpretation of the research are discussed. The findings are then contextualised within the theoretical and conceptual frameworks presented in Chapter 2. A discussion of the emerging themes concludes this section.

**Chapter 5** Discussion provides a detailed summary of the key points. This chapter revisits the research questions, objectives and findings of this thesis and addresses the theoretical and managerial contributions. The main implications of the studies are reviewed and contextualised across both the high involvement and low involvement ethical product consumption domains. The attitude-behaviour gap is then examined and related findings regarding construct relationships are expanded on. More specifically, the themes of Trust, Information, Ethical Motivation and Signalling and their relationships are discussed. Specific attention is dedicated to the implications of this research to practitioners, specifically in the high involvement domain with an in-depth discussion regarding the sustainable and energy efficiency debate. The related benefits are described and a conceptual model for translating this research into practice is introduced. It concludes by acknowledging the identified scope and limitations as well as possible directions for future research.

Finally, **Chapter 6** concludes by offering a summary of the main points discussed throughout the thesis, reflecting on the overall contribution presented by the research. These concluding remarks aim to position the research within the relevant theoretical and managerial debates to which it is contributing. It revisits the research problem and methodological considerations are summarised in relation to the relevant philosophical assumptions. The contributions of the study both from a theoretical and managerial perspective are then reviewed. Concluding remarks end the chapter providing a closure to the thesis.

The following figure provides an illustration of the main stages of the research process.

*Figure 4. Main Stages of the Research Process*



## **Chapter 2**

### **2.1 Literature Review**

This chapter reviews the ethical decision-making literature. It first introduces how ethical decision-making and conscious consumption are defined within the literature. It then provides a background to the different theoretical models that ethical decision-making has drawn on. Most notably, The Theory of Reasoned Action Model by Fishbein and Ajzen, the Theory of Planned Behaviour by Ajzen, the Attitude-Behaviour Context (ABC) by Stern et al., the Elaboration Likelihood Model by Petty and Cacioppo, and the Just World Theory by Lerner. The rationale for introducing these theories is to provide a base understanding of the literature that researchers have drawn on when exploring ethical decision-making constructs. These constructs are then discussed and include: Values, Motivation, Price, Perceived Image, Knowledge, Signaling, and Involvement. This thesis builds from this literature, with consideration for the established theoretical models and related constructs.

### **2.2 Ethical Decision-Making and Conscious Consumption**

Ethical choices are entering consumer consciousness and understanding this heightened awareness has become an important focus within consumer research (Cherrier & Murray, 2002; McEachern et al., 2010; Shaw et al., 2005). In addition to traditional consumption choices, ethical consumerism considers personal moral choices regarding social non-traditional aspects of products (Carrigan et al., 2004). Consumers use their buying power in what has been described as dollar voting when consuming ethically (Giesler & Veresiu, 2014). Consumers reward products that are deemed to be ethically favourable and boycott and avoid products deemed to be unethical. Consumers who consider environmental, animal, and ethical issues are referred to in the literature as 'ethical consumers' (Shaw, 2005). This term is now widely used when referring to such a consumer group. A 'conscious consumer' is seeking ethical alternatives; however, other social and economic forces impact on their behaviour (e.g. family, convenience, price) and due to these forces, positive ethical choices are not always made. Conscious consumers believe they have



a responsibility and obligation to society, which they show through their ethical and purchasing behaviour (Oloko & Ingo, 2011).

Ethical Consumerism refers to when consumers hold positive attitudes towards ethical products (Auger, et al., 2008) and ethical or conscious consumption is their buying behaviours (Balderjahn et al., 2011). A socially conscious consumer is defined by Webster (1975) as, “a consumer who takes into account the public consequences of his or her private consumption or who attempts to use his or her purchasing power to bring about social change” (Webster, 1975, p. 188). Conscious consumers consider the social consequences of their buying behaviour and express this as part of their responsibility towards society. They often reveal, “a range of contradictory behaviours regarding their ethical purchases” (Szmigin et al., 2009, p. 224). They are considered to be a valuable group and have been described as a ‘work in progress’ with this complex mix of behaviours (Szmigin et al., 2009).

Commonly found within the ethical consumption literature, is the notion of an attitude-behaviour gap, which exists among consumers (Ajzen, 1991). Research has focused on understanding the relationships and disparities between the attitudes and intentions of ethically minded consumers, yet minimal attention has been paid to the critical gap between the ethical purchase intentions and buying behaviours of these consumers (Bray et al., 2010). The focus needs to be placed not only on recognising forces that can impact conscious decision-making but also the importance of identifying what these forces are (Szmigin et al., 2009).

The different theoretical models that ethical decision-making has drawn on will be introduced in the next section, followed by a discussion of the constructs that can impact the sustainable consumption decision-making domain.

### **2.3 Theoretical Underpinnings**

The different theoretical models, The Theory of Reasoned Action Model by Fishbein and Ajzen, the Theory of Planned Behaviour by Ajzen, the Attitude-Behaviour Context (ABC) by Stern et al., the Elaboration Likelihood Model by

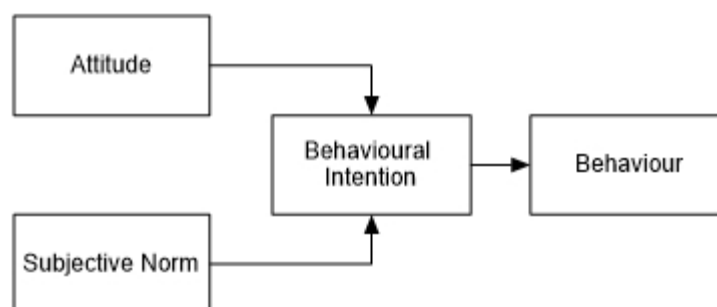
Petty and Cacioppo, and the Just World Theory by Lerner are introduced in this section. The review provides a base understanding of the theories that are drawn on within the ethical decision-making literature.

### **2.3.1 Theory of Reasoned Action**

The Theory of Reasoned Action (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1977) puts forward that behavioural intention, the immediate antecedents to behaviour, are a function of information or beliefs about the likelihood that performing a particular behaviour will lead to a specific outcome. The determinants of intention within this theory are conceptually independent: attitude towards the behaviour and subjective norm (Ajzen, 1985).

The following figure illustrates the Theory of Reasoned Action by Ajzen & Fishbein (1977).

*Figure 5. Conceptual Model -Theory of Reasoned Action*



Source: (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1977)

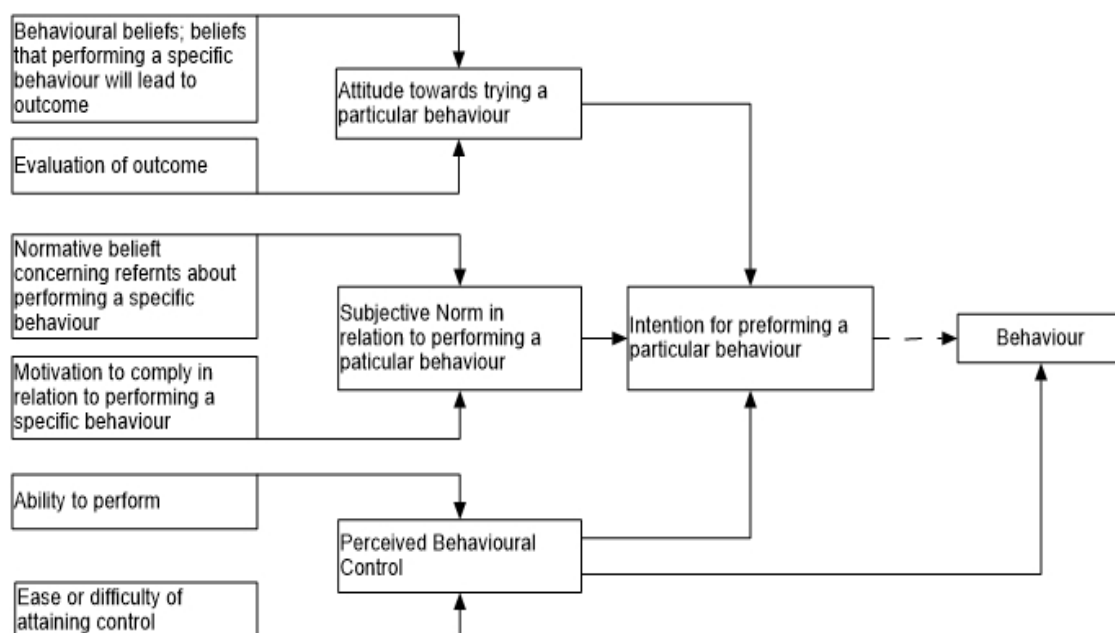
### **2.3.2 Theory of Planned Behaviour**

The Theory of Planned Behaviour (Ajzen, 1985) proposes an extension to the Theory of Reasoned Action by incorporating the notion of perceived control over behavioural achievement as a determinant of behavioural intentions and behaviour. It argues that the more resources and opportunities individuals think they possess, the greater their perceived behavioural control is over their behaviour (Ajzen, 1985).

This theory was developed after trying to understand the discrepancy between attitude and actual behaviour. This is relevant as it can relate to the attitude-behaviour gap in ethical consumerism. The theory states that the best predictor of behaviour is the intention to perform the behaviour, and that this intention is a function of one's attitude toward the behaviour, their subjective norm, and their perceived behavioural control (Ajzen, 1985). To define the elements of behaviour, Ajzen employed various methods; questionnaires, direct observation, and self-reporting. His work also provided others with insight on how to design behavioural questionnaires. This useful theory has aided communication strategies and evaluation messages in a number of disciplines (Schiffman et al., 2013). This theory is commonly cited throughout the decision-making literature and in the sustainable consumption domain.

The following figure illustrates the Theory of Planned Behaviour by Ajzen (1985).

*Figure 6. Conceptual Model -Theory of Planned Behaviour*



Source: (Ajzen, 1991).

### **2.3.2.1 Attitudes**

Attitude towards the behaviour refers to, “the degree to which a person has a favourable or unfavourable evaluation or appraisal of behaviour” (Ajzen, 1991, p. 188).

### **2.3.2.2 Subjective Norm**

Subjective or social norms refer to the perceived social pressure to perform or not perform the behaviour (Schiffman et al., 2013).

### **2.3.2.3 Perceived Behavioural Control**

The extent to which a consumer can easily consume a certain product, or whether that product is perceived as being difficult or impossible to consume describes an individual’s perceived behavioural control. It refers to the, “perceived ease or difficulty of performing the behaviour and it is assumed to reflect past experience as well as anticipated impediments and obstacles. As a general rule, the more favourable the attitude and subjective norm with respect to a behaviour, and the greater the perceived behavioural control, the stronger should be an individual’s intention to perform the behaviour under consideration” (Ajzen, 1991, p. 188). Individuals perceived behavioural control over the behaviour increases with the more resources and opportunities individuals think they possess (Ajzen, 1985).

The direct path from perceived behavioural control to behaviour is assumed to reflect the actual control an individual has over performing the behaviour. It is conceptualised to influence behaviour directly in that even if one intends to do something they may be unable to do so if the behaviour is not under their own will (Ajzen, 1985).

When examining the ethical consumption literature, two studies found perceived behavioural control to have a significant and positive impact on intention and actual purchase of sustainable products (Jin Ma et al., 2012; Wang et al., 2014). However, this was inconsistent in the literature with one study reporting no relationship between perceived behavioural control and

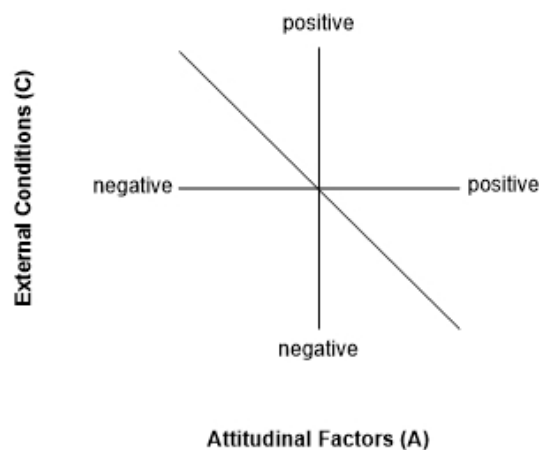
green purchase behaviour. Due to the limited research within this domain, further empirical investigation is warranted (Joshi & Rahman, 2015).

### 2.3.3 Attitude-Behaviour-Context (ABC)

The Attitude-Behaviour Context (ABC) model of environmentally significant behaviour was developed by Stern (2000) and his colleagues Guagnano *et al.*, (1995) and Stern *et al.*, (1999) to overcome the internal-external dichotomy in the social psychology literature. It is based on the understanding that “behaviour is a function of the organism and its environment” (Stern, 2000, p. 415). The ABC model incorporates the relationships of external conditions, attitudes, and behaviour which involve strategies for integrating internal processes and external conditions. Internal factors include influence of attitudes and external factors are considered to be contextual. As established by Stern, behaviour (B) is “an interactive product of personal sphere attitudinal variables (A) and contextual factors (C)” (Stern, 2000, p. 415). For personal behaviours that are not strongly favoured by context, the ABC theory states that the more difficult, time-consuming, or expensive the behaviour, the weaker its dependence on attitudinal factors (Stern., 2000).

The following figure shows The Attitude-Behaviour Context (ABC) model of environmentally significant behaviour established by Stern (2000), Guagnano *et al.*, (1995) and Stern *et al.*, (1999).

Figure 7. Conceptual Model -The Attitude-Behaviour-Context (ABC)



Source: (Stern., 2000).

The ABC model has been implemented to different pro-environmental behaviours, including household energy conservation. Stern referred to Black et al., (1985) who, even before the model was fully developed, used similar concepts to study 478 residential electricity consumers and examined their behaviour. Behaviour may be affected indirectly. Demographic, economic, structural and other contextual variables have been found to affect behaviour indirectly through personal variables, such as, attitudes, beliefs and norms. Although unconstrained behaviours were influenced by norms and personal variables, the ABC model suggested that they were less influential on more constrained actions (Black et al., 1985).

#### ***2.3.4 Elaboration Likelihood Model - Routes to Persuasion***

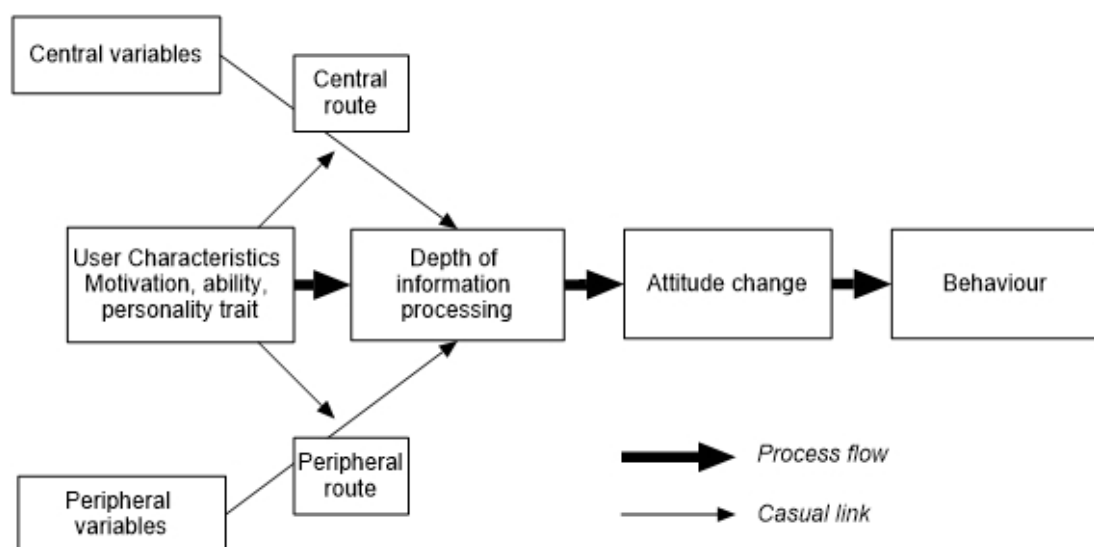
The Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM) of attitude formation and change by Petty and Cacioppo, (1981) is based on the idea that attitudes guide decisions and other behaviours. It introduces different routes to persuasion based on how much elaboration (involvement) occurs with the behaviour. Persuasion is seen as a primary source that influences attitudes. The central and peripheral routes to persuasion that are introduced in this model are seen as different persuasive influences. Information required to persuade consumers such as advertising messages and other forms of marketing communications explain the persuasive influences, and this is based on the route with which they have been identified. For example, high involvement products (that have a higher financial risk, higher social risk, require extended problem solving), a consumer is likely to think through the advertising and examine the details and information. In this model, this is referred to the central route to persuasion. With low involvement products (that have a lower financial risk, lower social risk, and are routinised items), a consumer is more likely to be persuaded by music, pictures, and short slogans within the advertisements often found in television advertising. This is referred to as the peripheral route to persuasion (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986).

Involvement is a key construct in this model. This is the extent to which an individual is willing and able to 'think' about the object and its supporting materials. Products with high financial risk, high social risk and those that

require extended problem solving are considered to be high involvement. When people are motivated and able to think about the content of the message, elaboration is high and they are persuaded through the central route. Conversely, the peripheral route is the likely result of low elaboration (Petty & Cacioppo, 1981). When considering the involvement construct, an opportunity exists to explore how aspects of this model could be examined through the lens of ethical decision making.

The following figure illustrates the Elaboration Likelihood Model by Petty and Cacioppo, (1981). On the left-hand side of the model, central variables and peripheral variables that lead to the different routes to persuasion are located. Highly motivated consumers (purchasing a product of high involvement) will do the necessary thinking to understand the information presented and will therefore be persuaded more by central variables which lead them down the central route. Less motivated consumers (purchasing a product of lower-involvement) are persuaded more by peripheral variables, which include music, packaging, spokespeople and music and are therefore persuaded by peripheral variables and travel down the peripheral route to persuasion. Both routes together or alone create an attitude change that results in a behavioural change (Petty & Cacioppo, 1981).

Figure 8. Conceptual Model -Elaboration Likelihood Model



Source: (Schiffman et al., 2013).

### **2.3.5 *Just World Theory***

Just World Theory by Melvin Lerner states that people believe that the world is just and therefore will look for ways to explain and rationalise any injustices that they see occurring (Lerner, 1980). People on the receiving end of the injustice are seen to generally receive what they deserve. Lerner's 1980 monograph, *The Belief in a Just World: A Fundamental Delusion* summarised his findings (Lerner, 1980). He found that those that have strong beliefs in a just world are less likely to acknowledge societal inequalities and are less willing to provide help to the disadvantaged (Lerner, 1980). Conversely, those who are more sensitive to injustice tend to not align closely with the theory and are more willing to offer assistance (Torres-Harding et al., 2012).

Lerner's research found that for people to rationalise an inexplicable injustice, they would need to believe that one is simply getting what they deserve (Lerner, 1980). He theorised that the specific conditions that correspond to certain consequences are socially determined by a society's norms and ideologies. Lerner viewed his theory as functional and could be used to influence the world in a predictable way. Lerner explained that the Just World Theory was based on the premise that people need to maintain their own well-being when confronted by conflicting evidence demonstrating that the world is not just, for example, when they see suffering occurring in the world without an apparent cause. He went on to explain that people develop strategies when confronted with these injustices. These strategies can be either rational (accepting the reality of injustice and one's ability or inability to prevent them) or irrational (denial, withdrawal, and reinterpretation) (Lerner, 1980).

Lerner's work has been applied to many domains in the social sciences, and many philosophers and social theorists have referenced his theory.

### **2.3.6 *Social Justice***

Social justice is the belief in human rights, equal access to resources and other opportunities for all of humanity. Past research has defined the socially responsible consumer in terms of their personal values, attitudes, motivations, personality traits, and beliefs etcetera (Webster, 1975). However, a person's



ethical consumption behaviour is also significantly impacted by their perception of social justice. (Torres-Harding et al., 2012).

Applying Ajzen's (1991) Theory of Planned Behaviour, Torres-Harding et al. (2012) were able to link attitudes and behaviour to social justice through the development of The Social Justice Scale (SJS) (Torres-Harding et al., 2012). Attitudes towards social justice were measured as were related values and perceived self-efficacy and social norms around the social justice efforts. It also examined plans to take action and engage in social justice practices. This scale has also been applied in a consumption context. Their work confirmed Lerner's Just World Theory work and people who scored high on the Social Justice Scale were less likely to believe the world to be a fair and just place. Their findings also demonstrated that participants who also had high levels of social justice related behaviours were more likely to have scored high on the SJS scale (Torres-Harding et al., 2012). These people felt they had a moral obligation to uphold their attitudes regarding social justice and acted responsively towards injustices. Deontic justice is described as those who believe that there is a moral rule and they have a sense of duty to uphold injustices and moral obligation. They are motivated by justice for the sake of justice (Cropanzano et al., 2003; Folger, 1998; Folger & Cropanzano, 2001).

### ***2.3.7 Deontic Justice –Norms of Moral Obligation***

A multidimensional deontic justice scale was developed by Beugre (2012) to understand the extent in which moral obligation, moral accountability, and moral outrage impact justice judgements and actions (Beugre, 2012). An individual's moral obligation for oneself and also others shapes and the conformity to these obligations determine whether behaviour is viewed as fair. His work demonstrated the roles of morality and provided a sense of duty in fairness to justice actions. Deontic justice is expressed by people who perceive fairness as a moral principle and have witnessed an injustice. They experience moral outrage and have an urge to restore justice (Beugre, 2012).

Cropanzano et al., (2003) applied deontic justice to consumption decision-making and found that deontic justice when beyond self-interest. When

presented with a product that when purchasing was viewed as a way restore justice, consumers were willing to do so even when their identities were hidden (they were anonymous) and consumers were also willing to pay more for justice restoration. In addition, they were also willing to do this even when the victim was not closely linked to them and not a member of their own social group (Cropanzano et al., 2003). Justice related ethical decision-making can therefore apply deontic justice to better understand influences that impact the process. These findings provide insights in determining support for ethical products by studying the extent to which justice concerns are viewed as a moral obligation to help address injustices.

### **2.3.8 *Justice Restoration Potential***

Concerns about justice can generate a wide range of ethical consumption behaviour and parallels exist between making charitable donations and making ethical product decisions. People use their money to express their support or rejection to companies and their products that align with their ethical ideals, just like they do when they choose how to allocate their charitable funds (White et al., 2012). Individuals react positively to social or ethical products and prefer to purchase fair-trade products over those made with sweatshop labour.

Justice restoration potential refers to whether the, “particular avenue is perceived as having the possibility of restoring justice” (White et al., 2012, p. 104). When applying this to an ethical decision-making context, justice restoration potential is high when a consumer knows that there is a good chance an injustice occurred and that they can impact the situation and restore this injustice through their purchasing decision. This results in consumers being more inclined to provide assistance through their support of purchasing ethical products as justice restoration potential appears to be high. When the impact of purchasing a product doesn’t seem to have the ability to foster change and restore an injustice, people are less likely to provide assistance as the justice restoration potential appears to be low (White et al., 2012).

### ***2.3.9 Justice Restoration Potential -Applied to Just World Theory***

Just world theory has been applied to the ethical consumption domain by White et al. (2012). They demonstrated that under certain conditions consumers' intentions to purchase ethical products was impacted on just world theory. Their work provides new insights into how and why consumers choose ethical products and how their concerns about justice for others can influence their decisions. They were able to demonstrate that consumers' belief in a just world and justice restoration potential was the base for their responses towards ethical products. They found that consumers support fair trade products when their belief in a just world was high and the conditions presented a high need for justice restoration potential rather than low justice restoration potential. Consumers were found to alter the injustice and provide assistance when they believed the potential to restore justice was high and they therefore had the opportunity to help by purchasing the fair trade product. When purchasing ethical products, it was not enough for the consumer to be provided with the opportunity to help, consumers needed to realize their actual influence on the injustice. As one strategy demonstrated, people can be persuaded to believe that victims deserve to suffer negative consequences (Lerner, 1980; Hafer & Begue, 2005). It was discovered that consumers need to be aware that their purchasing support for ethical products has an actual impact in restoring justice.

### ***2.3.10 Information Acceleration***

Knowing that information influences the decision-making process, Urban, Weinberg, and Hauser (1996) introduced the concept of Information Acceleration (IA). They state that the basic idea of IA is, "to place the consumers in a virtual buying environment that simulates the information that is available to the consumer at the time he or she makes a purchase decision" (Urban et al., 1996 p.48). The following lists the elements of Information Acceleration: future conditioning, user experience, full information, active search, and user control (Urban et al., 1996). Urban et al. (1997) found that IA has the potential to forecast actual sales and this could be predicted from a decision-making context where participants were placed in environments that provided various choice situations including accelerated information.

## **2.4 Constructs**

The following will describe the ethical decision-making constructs. These constructs include: Values, Motivation, Price, Perceived Image, Knowledge, and Involvement.

### **2.4.1 Values**

Values and the influence they have on consumer behaviour have been extensively studied, particularly in an ethical decision-making context. Values express the goals and needs that motivate people and influence the ways these goals and needs are attained, for example, product choice and brand choice (Burgess, 1992; Engel et al., 1995). Action is motivated by values which provide direction and emotional intensity (Schwartz, 1994). Vitell et al. (2001) found that consumers are more guided by values than consequences and that the perceived ethics of the action or behaviour is more influential on consumers than the outcomes of such actions (Vitell et al. 2001).

Values that influence consumers' purchasing behaviour can be categorised as both personal and contextual (Tanner & Kast, 2003). Ethical or sustainable behaviour has been linked to personal values (Vermier & Verbeke, 2006). Sustainable consumption has been linked to the values: universalism, benevolence, self-direction, honesty, idealism, equality, freedom, and responsibility. Less ethical or less sustainable consumption patterns have been linked to the values: power, hedonism, tradition, security, conformity, and ambition (Vermier & Verbeke, 2006). The personal influences include attitudes, personal norms, perceived behaviour barriers and knowledge. The contextual influences include socioeconomic characteristics, living conditions, and store characteristics (Tanner & Kast, 2003). Tanner and Kast (2003) gained insight into the role these influences have on consumers through a survey that explored how they related to ethical purchases. Ethical consumption occurs when the consumer has a positive attitude towards environmental protection, fair trade, local products, and the availability of action-related knowledge. Ethical consumption did not occur when the consumer associated it with perceived time barriers and an increased frequency of shopping trips (Tanner & Kast, 2003). Tanner and Kast (2003)

concluded that ethical behaviour was not only driven by personal factors, but also contextual factors. These factors sometimes act as barriers that keep the intention-behaviour gap from closing.

Milton Rokeach was a prolific researcher in human values and provided the foundation for research on the values construct in the ethical decision-making literature (Shaw et al., 2005). In his work, Rokeach not only defined what a value is he also developed a values classifications instrument which consisted of a comprehensive list of values termed the, "Rokeach Value Survey" (Rokeach, 1973). Research on the values construct was conducted by Schwartz and Bilsky (1987). Schwartz and Bilsky were not only successful in replicating many of the values identified in Rokeach's studies but also managed to refine the values construct list down to ten groups. This work had been tested out in the fields of political and social research, but not yet in ethical decision-making until 2005 with the work of Shaw et al. Shaw et al., (2005) focused specifically on ethical decision-making as they reviewed the values construct. They used Schwartz's refined Value Survey as a basis for their research. However, they discovered that no specific list of values had been identified for ethical or moral decision making. Shaw et al., (2005) studied the values that were identified in this previous work but also expanded on this model through the exploration of different value meanings in the context of ethical consumption. Through this, they discovered that some previously identified value meanings within the ethical consumption domain were inappropriate and that additional value measures were required (Shaw et al., 2005). They were able to provide important insight into the nature and pertinence of those values.

Influences on consumers' purchasing behaviour have been researched extensively. In conscious consumer behaviour research, Shaw et al. (2005) conducted a qualitative study using focus groups and in-depth interviews and explored those values suitable to ethical consumers in decision-making. Their results showed that significant values emerged, including: Self-direction, Stimulation, Achievement, Hedonism, Security, Benevolence, Universalism, and Conformity (Shaw et al., 2005). These values provided insight to the

ethical consumption literature, for example, people who adhere to the value “universalism” may be motivated to protect the environment and therefore buy environmentally safe products (Schwartz, 1994). The results from their study, aligned with the literature and universalism values with an emphasis on prosocial concern, were considered most important in ethical consumer decision-making.

Studying the values construct in ethical consumer decision-making provides insight into how methodologies are employed to study variables that relate to sustainable consumption. It has been implied that some values, like universalism, and a sustainable consumption pattern when promoting the right values can facilitate the achievement of closing the sustainable consumption decision-making gap (Thøgersen, 2001). Research has also shown that the extent of sustainable behaviour depends on specific factors; habits, attitudes, preferences, and on sustainable consumption opportunities (Thøgersen, 2001).

Understanding the work that has been done to identify and or measure other constructs is important to gain a comprehensive understanding of this domain. Research in the area of sustainable consumption decision-making states that people’s intentions to purchase sustainable products do not always match their behaviour. This literature provides insight into research study design and important related construct developments. This is an emerging area, and as consumers are becoming more aware of environmental issues, researchers are curious about how this heightened awareness impacts consumption behaviour.

#### **2.4.2 Motivation**

While most environmental initiatives attempt to educate consumers about the harmful effects of their consumption, unfortunately, environmental attitudes and knowledge are not good predictors of behaviour. Research has found a disconnect between knowledge and actions and even people who are well-informed about the environment often fail to act on their knowledge (Ajzen et al., 2011; Seligman, 1985). However, some literature suggests that intrinsic

and extrinsic motivation can initiate environmental behaviour. For example, some people are motivated to engage in environmentally friendly behaviour because they enjoy doing it and they feel that it is worthwhile, while other people are motivated to engage in environmentally friendly behaviour because they are receiving some type of incentive or some type of punishment. Intrinsic motivation refers to motivation which is driven by interest or involvement in the task itself because it is enjoyable or interesting, this motivation is internal. Extrinsic motivation refers to the performance of an activity to attain an outcome (Deci & Ryan 2002).

Pelletier et al., (1998) later applied these motives to the environmental domain. They developed the Motivation Towards the Environment Scale (MTES) and their research explored the correlation between the motivation towards the environment and subscales and environmental behaviours. The subscales were based on the early work that differentiated between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation (Deci & Ryan, 1991). They found that people behaved differently depending on if they were from the intrinsically motivated or extrinsically motivated subscales. Higher forms of self-determination (intrinsic motivation, integrated, and identified regulations) were associated with the internal locus of control subscale, whereas the other subscales were associated with the lowest form of motivation on the self-determination continuum (external regulation and a-motivation) (Green-Demers et al., 1997). Green-Demers, Pelletier, and Menard (1997) discovered that people are behaving in an environmentally conscious way for different reasons and that these reasons are differentially related to various consequences and suggested that the frequency of environmental behaviour varies with the degree of behavioural difficulty. As behaviour becomes more difficult, individuals may need more self-determination to act in an environmentally conscious way (Green-Demers et al., 1997).

When developing the Motivation Towards the Environment Scale (MTES) Pelletier et al., 1998 conducted four studies. The goal of the first study was to create six subscales designed to measure motivation constructs proposed by Deci and Ryan's (1985) Self Determination Theory (SDT) (Pelletier et al.,

1998). This was exploratory, and thus, interviews were conducted to identify the different types of motivation. Consumers were then asked to rank questions on a seven point Likert scale (Pelletier et al., 1998). The number of participants in the study was 412. A scale of motivation was constructed for environmental behaviour, which consisted of 4x6 statements (four statements for each type of motivation on the SDT motivation scale: intrinsic, integrated, identified, introjected, external, and a-motivation) responding to the question, 'Why are you doing things for the environment?'. They conducted a regression analysis, and bivariate scatter-plots were used to display the results (Pelletier et al., 1998).

The second study was to verify the factorial structure of the MTES on a second sample of participants and to confirm the analysis. This was again done through a questionnaire, however this time it consisted of random questions and with an increased sample size of 750 participants (Pelletier et al., 1998). The process of how the questionnaires were distributed and the follow-up schedule was described in the method section. The findings supported some aspects of their scale developed from their first study, and this informed the authors of the strength of these various subscales.

The third study tested out the construct validity of the MTES by assessing relationships between its subscales and various related environmental and psychological constructs (Pelletier et al., 1998). This time the questionnaire packages included measures of related constructs, and the sample size was 290 participants. Once the subgroups were defined, scales from previous literature that related to each subgroup were used to refine each subgroup and test the developing scale. The information from this study was useful in refining the questions for the subgroups of MTES (Pelletier et al., 1998).

The final study was to examine the reliability of the newly refined MTES. This time a sample of 66 university students participated in the study. Test reliability was reviewed through a correlation analysis of the mean scores of the MTES subscales from two separate samples (Pelletier et al., 1998).



The paper concluded with a discussion of how the MTES is applicable in the field of ethical consumption (Pelletier et al., 1998). They suggested a correlation between environmental concerns and intrinsic motivations. Behaviours performed because of intrinsic motivations were also found to more likely be sustained over time. Additionally, environmental behaviours were more likely to be performed when parents and peers support autonomous self-regulation (Villacorta et al., 2003). They recognized the gap in knowledge around ethical consumption and discussed factors related to environmentally responsible behaviours, environmental knowledge and attitudes, as well as behaviour intervention strategies (Pelletier et al., 1998).

#### **2.4.3 Price**

Rapid globalisation has resulted in a heightened awareness of the externalised costs of production (environmental degradation, carbon dioxide emissions etcetera) and this awareness has consumers looking for ways to lessen their cognitive dissonance through their purchasing decisions. Consumers are willing to pay more for this “peace of mind” (Banu, 2013). However, high prices are also reported as a barrier that contributes to the positive attitude and purchase behaviour gap (Vermeir & Verbeke, 2006; Young et al., 2010). In other words, they may be willing to pay more, however, at the point of sale, the price can act as a barrier. Consumers generally prefer low priced environmentally conscious products and attach more importance to price as compared to their claims (Cranfield et al., 2010; Eze & Ndubisi, 2013). Thus, if the price of the product is higher than their expectations, it will undermine the effectiveness of their environmentally conscious attitude and contribute to the attitude-behaviour gap.

#### **2.4.4 Corporate Social Responsibility –Perceived Image**

Ethical consumption has received a lot of attention recently, and Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) has emerged as a major focus that companies strive to obtain in the consumer packaged goods literature. This awareness has led consumers to take a company’s CSR status and background into account when making purchasing decisions, and in doing so, they are

engaging in conscious consumption (Auger et al., 2008). Consumers favour companies and brands that exhibit business ethics show positive attitudes towards the ethical attributes of a product and are willing to engage in social awareness of consumption behaviour (Auger et al., 2003). Consumers also take into consideration the ethical aspects of products when they make purchasing decisions (Auger et al. 2008). However, a consumer's evaluation of a company's product line is influenced by their evaluation of the company's overall Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) actions (Bhattacharya & Sankar 2003). Many studies have demonstrated that if a product has acceptable social attributes, consumers are willing to pay more for those products in an effort to reward a company's ethical behaviour (Creyer et al., 1997).

#### **2.4.5 Signalling**

Signalling theory is useful when describing the communication between two parties and can be either honest or dishonest in nature. A dishonest signal usually benefits the signaller (Connelly et al., 2011). Consumers use luxury goods to signal their social status. Those who are wealthy, signal to the less affluent that they are not one of them. These consumers also tend to have a high need for status. Similarly, consumers who are wealthy and have a low need for status use luxury goods quietly, not to signal to others but to associate to their own kind (Han et al., 2010). Another study on signalling suggested that pro-environmental behaviour can be promoted by status competition (Griskevicius et al., 2010). They found that status motives influence the desire for green products when shopping in public and when green products cost more than non-green products. Signalling status through luxury consumption enhances one's status and produces benefits in social interactions (Nelissen et al., 2011). Another construct that has been found in high involvement luxury literature is the construct of "brand prominence" a construct reflecting the conspicuousness of a brand's mark or logo on a product (Han et al., 2010). Han et al., (2010) demonstrated how a consumer's wealth and their need for status along with their desire to be associated or dissociated with members for their own groups could be used to predict their preference to use luxury brands conspicuously or inconspicuously (Han et al., 2010). The current research

gains insight into the perceived signalling behaviour in the sustainable and energy efficient home purchasing process.

#### **2.4.6 Knowledge**

Knowledge is mentioned extensively in the literature as one of the most influential factors that affect sustainable purchase intention and behaviour (Joshi & Rahman, 2015; Eze & Ndubisi, 2013). Joshi & Rahman (2015) conducted a review of fifty-three empirical articles related to attitude-behaviour inconsistencies in the context of green purchasing. They found that knowledge was the most studied variable with eighteen papers examining the construct (Joshi & Rahman, 2015). Of the eighteen, fifteen concluded that knowledge of environmental issues positively influenced consumer intention and actual purchase of green products (Eze & Ndubisi, 2013). Most studies show that consumers' knowledge of social and environmental issues positively affects their attitude and actual purchasing of ethical products (Smith & Paladino, 2010). Numerous other studies have also reported that knowledge of organic food positively affected the formation of organic attitudes (Smith & Paladino, 2010). It also was suggested that environmental knowledge moderates the relationship between ecological attitude and green behaviour (Fraj-Andres & Martinez-Salinas, 2007). What is interesting are the few studies that did not find consumer knowledge to be an influence on green purchases. This occurred in the case of fuel-efficient vehicles (Bang et al., 2000) and also research on wind power. In the case of wind power, the knowledge of environmental benefits was not found to be associated with positive attitudes toward wind power projects (Wolsink, 2007). The above findings suggest that environmental knowledge may have a positive effect on consumer green purchase intention and behaviour. However, further research in this area is needed and has been encouraged within the papers to correctly establish the influence of environmental knowledge on green purchase intention and behaviour.

## 2.5 Involvement

The concept of involvement is important in consumer research. It is viewed to be a major determinant of the level of effort consumers exert during the consumption decision making process (Phau & Prendergast, 1998; Zaichkowsky, 1985). As discussed in 2.1.4 Elaboration Likelihood Model - Routes to Persuasion, the level of consumer involvement determines the level of persuasive influences needed when forming attitudes towards a brand. Since the consumer spends more time elaborating on the persuasive influences when purchasing a high involvement product and less time for low-involvement products (Richens & Bloch, 1986) it has been suggested that the decision-making process is therefore partially affected by product involvement (Kapferer & Laurent, 1985).

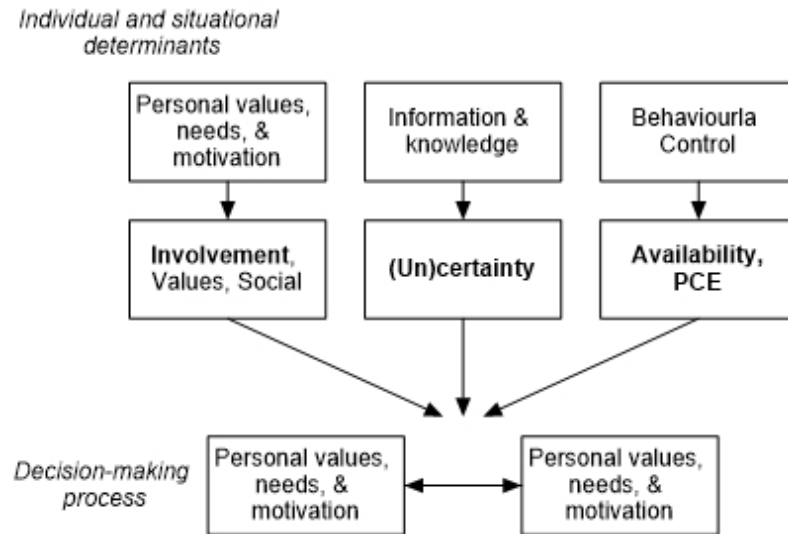
The effectiveness of various advertisement features is dependent on a person's involvement with the product (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986). Central cues rich with information are more important under conditions of high involvement whereas peripheral cues that require less cognitive processing were found to be more important under low involvement conditions (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986). A recent study by Te'eni-Harari et al., (2009) demonstrated this when exploring product involvement and attitude formation towards children's toys. They found that advertisement effectiveness was positively influenced when children perceived a product as meaningful and relevant to them (high involvement) (Te'eni-Harari et al., 2009). Messages that were not meaningful and relevant (low involvement) were less influential in changing attitude formation. Nager (2016) examined this further in the context of green advertisements and found that attitude toward the advertisement on brand image was moderated by product involvement, and that an increase in attitude toward ethical attributes in advertisements had a stronger effect on brand image (Nager, 2016). Her findings support previous research that demonstrated that the involvement construct is significant in understanding the ethical decision-making process. This literature underscores the importance of studying consumer product involvement as it is vital in understanding the consumer decision making process and also in developing an effective communications strategy.

Previous research has also found that consumers become more involved with a product or service when personal consequences are highlighted, and the importance of the product are emphasised (Schiffman et al., 2013). Most of the literature looks at low involvement products when examining ethical consumption decision making, however since consumers are actively participating in the purchasing process when they are highly involved, further investigation with high involvement ethical products could provide new insights into the intention behaviour gap.

Vermeir and Verbeke (2006) examined the presumed attitude-behaviour intention gap in relation to consumer decision-making towards sustainable food purchasing. They analysed a number of constructs including; “the impact of involvement, values, certainty, perceived availability, perceived consumer effectiveness (PCE), values, and social norms on consumers’ attitudes and intentions towards sustainable food products” (Vermeir & Verbeke, 2006, p. 169). They found that consumers were more involved in purchasing situations when they had strong environmental and social values and this correlated significantly with their intention to buy. They were able to demonstrate that food with ethical/sustainable attributes could be encouraged by raising involvement (Vermeir & Verbeke, 2006).

The following figure illustrates the Involvement Uncertainty and Perceived Consumer Effectiveness Model.

*Figure 9. Conceptual Model -Involvement, Uncertainty and Perceived Consumer Effectiveness*



Source: (Vermeir and Verbeke, 2006).

Involvement has been linked to the motivation construct as it is perceived as a personal importance. When a product, service or promotional message meets the needs, goals, and or values of the consumer, the involvement construct is activated (Vermeir & Verbeke, 2006). Therefore, the object or service is seen as important because it addresses consumers' needs, goals and values. People are motivated to invest a more cognitive effort into the decision-making process when they are highly involved. Similarly, when consumers do not see the object or service as important they are less motivated (low involvement) and habitual behaviours occur (Vermeir & Verbeke, 2006). Several important factors within the decision-making process are influenced by involvement. These factors include information search, attitude and intentions, formation of beliefs, and behavioural outcomes (variety seeking, brand loyalty, product usage and shopping enjoyment) (Beharrell & Denison, 1995; Verbeke & Vackier, 2004, Vermeir & Verbeke, 2006).

When exploring motivational research, intrinsic motivation has been tied closely to the, "degree of commitment to the environment" and this has been referred to as environmental involvement (Schuhwerk & Lefkoff-Hagius, 1995, p. 45). Consumers who vary in their level of environmental involvement also respond differently to related advertising communications. For example,

Cheng et al. (2018) demonstrated that consumers are less skeptical of ethical advertising when they have a high intrinsic motivation towards the environment (high environmental involvement) (Cheng et al., 2018). Environmental involvement was regarded as an aspect of product involvement; however, the study did not differentiate between routinised products (low product involvement) and unfamiliar (high product involvement) products.

Social norms and how they influence behaviour have also been studied in the ethical decision-making literature. Two studies have examined the subjective norm construct that was introduced in Ajzen and Fishbein's (1980) Theory of Reasoned Action Model (found above under 2.1.2.2 Subjective Norm) and its relationship to ethical decision making. One paper by Thøgersen (2006) studied low involvement products with ethical features and found that the subjective norm measure was not always capturing social pressure, rather it sometimes captured descriptive norms. His paper also found that personal norms were most important in the decision-making process. The study focused on routinised low involvement ethical products: organic milk and energy efficient light bulbs (Thøgersen, 2006). Another study by Mustapha et al., (2018) also examined ethical decision making and the subjective norm construct. However, their study focused on high involvement products with ethical features (solar water heaters) and the results contradicted the claim by Thøgersen (2006) that personal norms were the most important (more than social norms) in the decision-making process. Literature on subjective norms and their relationships to the decision-making process demonstrates that the contradictions existing between product involvement levels warrants further investigation.

Another study by Papista et al., (2017) explored the moderating effect of involvement on other factors that measure ethical product decision-making, such as customer value dimensions and relationship quality. They found that the effects of switching costs on consumer values were moderated by ethical involvement (ethical elaboration). Their work presented ethical involvement as an element of product involvement (Papista et al., 2017). Similarly, Bezençon

and Blili (2010) studied the relationship of involvement and ethical product consumption. They develop a model that explored ethical decision making by measuring involvement, its antecedents, and its impact on the consumption of fair trade coffee. Their research found that a consumers' behaviour was more related to their level of involvement in fair-trade decisions than their involvement in coffee (Bezençon and Blili, 2010). This again demonstrated that ethical involvement is an element of product involvement. However, both papers only studied routinised products (low involvement) with ethical features.

The involvement construct has a significant impact on the decision-making process. Reviewing the related constructs within the ethical consumption decision making literature demonstrates the importance of further exploring the involvement construct with ethical decision making. When comparing studies that focused on high involvement ethical products and low involvement ethical products, the literature demonstrates some contradictions in construct relationships to the decision-making process. This literature review demonstrates that the involvement construct and its relationship to the decision-making process varies between product involvement levels. Investigating to what extent constructs within the ethical decision-making process are similar or different between ethical consumption involvement levels will be a main focus of this thesis. The aim is to understand the relationship between involvement and consumption and to identify and compare the antecedents of high and low involvement decisions which will provide insight into the ethical consumption attitude-behaviour gap.

## **2.6 Conclusion**

This chapter discussed the major theories, variables, and constructs that have received the most attention and those that have been overlooked but should be included in the ethical decision-making literature. Although consumers' growing interest in ethical consumption has been well-documented, the understanding of the link between their stated intentions and actual behaviour has not. This review demonstrated that environmental concerns, information, involvement, and subjective norms emerge as major drivers. It discussed



ethical decision-making and conscious consumption terminology and the several decision-making models that have been employed within the ethical consumption domain. Constructs that moderate and mediate these models were also discussed. Cultural and demographic factors were not discussed within the papers. Future research could explore these additional factors that influence/cause the reported inconsistency in ethical consumption behaviour as well as a further investigate the involvement construct to close this prevalent attitude-behaviour gap.

## **Chapter 3**

### **3.1 Methodology**

The current research pursues an understanding of the forces that impact ethical decision-making with high involvement products and gains insight into how this differs to purchasing low involvement ethical products. In approaching this issue, the discussions so far have addressed the following points. In Chapter 1 the gap between consumers' intention and behaviour in ethical decision-making was first addressed. It then highlights the importance of studying ethical decision-making in not only low but also high product involvement domains and proposes a conceptual model that enables a more holistic approach to ethical decision-making in consumptions. Identifying factors that influence intention in both low and high involvement ethical purchases are also emphasised as critical to understanding this domain. Chapter 2 discusses decision-making literature and the background of the relevant theoretical models as well as the related constructs. It also addresses high and low involvement products in relation to ethical decision making. Based on the information presented thus far, this chapter will discuss the methodological strategy that best fits with the objectives of this thesis.

### **3.2 Introduction**

The methodological strategy of this thesis is presented and justified in this chapter and a general approach to how one can reasonably satisfy the requirements of research questions is established. This section begins with an overview of the research objectives followed by an explanation of the research questions and chosen methodology. An important area of enquiry then takes place with a methodological debate of the philosophical assumptions and theoretical positions of the methodologies, including their ontological and epistemological underpinnings. This is followed by a discussion of two qualitative research methodologies, phenomenology and interviewing, and their interpretive paradigms. Next, identified participants, the process of conducting field work, data collection methods and analysis are discussed. Lastly, ethical issues and methodological implications are examined.

### **3.2.1 Research Questions**

This research explores the nature of the attitude-behaviour gap in ethical product decision making; more specifically, how high involvement ethical decisions differ from low involvement ethical decisions. It achieved this by looking at the intention (aims, plans, goals) expressed and the behaviour (practices, activities, and performances) manifested by participants through physical events and activities they participate in, and how meaning is constructed through these experiences. In doing so, this work also aids in the understanding of the relationships between involvement and consumption and identifies and compares the antecedents of high and low involvement decisions. This comparison of constructs provides insight into the ethical consumption attitude-behaviour gap through the comparison of constructs of high ethical elaboration between both high involvement (housing) and low involvement (produce) products. As mentioned in the introduction, ethical consumption decision-making literature has identified forces that can impact ethical decision-making of low-involvement products. The current research identifies forces that impact the ethical decision-making process of high involvement products. In addition to the above mentioned theoretical contributions, the practical contributions improve the existing but small SEE real estate conversation.

To address these objectives, the following research questions were developed:

- To what extent does ethical decision-making of high involvement products differ from ethical decision-making of low involvement products?
- In what ways do the antecedents differ between high involvement and low involvement ethical products?
- What is the relationship between involvement and ethical consumption?

In having discussed the above points, the current research has implicitly taken methodological decisions to adopt a particular research paradigm. The research objectives and questions lend themselves to a qualitative methodology. It is, in principle, grounded in an interpretive approach with the

philosophical assumption of subjectivism and an associated qualitative research methods technique. A rationale for why the current research has moved in this direction as well as an explanation on how qualitative research methods address the current research questions are included in the following discussion. This discussion aims to address and support the choice of this particular method.

### **3.3 Methodological Debate**

There exists in the social sciences, a methodological debate that focuses on which approach should be used when researching to better understand the world around us. The debate is necessary as it continues the development of knowledge as each paradigm has distinct limitations. Broadly speaking, the approaches fall under the two paradigms, quantitative and qualitative. On one end, there is a positivist approach (quantitative), where research is deductive and objective; on the other end, there is an interpretive approach (qualitative), where research is inductive and subjective. Both paradigms are associated with a set of philosophical assumptions that underpin the relationship between ontology, epistemology and human nature concerning the research topic. The following section will discuss these assumptions and the characteristics of each paradigm as well as specific research techniques that align with each approach.

#### **3.3.1 *Philosophical Assumptions***

Before conducting research, the presumptions of ontology, epistemology and the nature of how the social world is viewed must be considered in relation to the research domain. The following summarises these assumptions and concerns as well as the philosophical underpinnings which shape the research discourse.

The ontological philosophical assumption focuses on the nature of being or the nature of reality. In the social science domain, ontological assumptions affirm 'identities of facts' (Hughes & Sharrock, 1990 p.6). The questions it poses are: Is there such a thing as a social reality? What is the nature of being?

What is the nature of existence? What can be known about it? (Hughes & Sharrock, 1990). Two philosophical approaches can answer these questions, objectivism and constructivism. Objectivism claims that social phenomena and their meanings have an existence that is independent of social actors (Holden & Lynch, 2004). In other words, social reality is existing without any influence from individuals. Constructivism, claims that reality is socially constructed and people make sense of the world based on their interpretation of it. Social actors have an active and crucial role in the construction of social reality. That reality is a process of construction and reconstruction (Macionis & Gerber, 2010).

Qualitative researchers study individuals with the intent of reporting multiple realities (Creswell, 2013). Evidence of multiple realities includes the use of various forms of data to present different people's perspectives in themes using their own language/words (Creswell, 2013). The approach that best describes this is phenomenology, which reports how people participating in a study view their experiences differently (Moustakas, 1994). This method views participants as having multiple realities and is therefore referred to as a relativist viewpoint. Reality is subjective, and there is no access to reality independent of our minds. In practice, qualitative research methods use the world of participants in quotes and themes to show differing perspectives (Creswell, 2013). A study would take a more realist approach if the focus was more deductive, measuring to what extent the constructs impact decision making. This method would be used if the phenomena was objective, having only one reality and one truth that does not change and needs to be measured. In an objective approach the method is often deductive, and once it is discovered what truth is, it can be generalised to other situations. Past ethical consumption studies have applied this approach to the field, generalising ethical decision-making findings from low involvement ethical products to the domain of high involvement ethical products. The current research identifies ethical decision-making of high involvement products as a category that must first be explored through qualitative methods so that the realities within that domain are captured before deductive measurement takes place.

The epistemological, philosophical assumption concerns the nature of knowledge. It focuses on what knowledge means to a person, how they understand something, and what the basis is for true knowledge. This leads to two main questions when conducting research: What should be considered adequate knowledge in the discipline? Can the social world be studied according to the same principles as in the nature of the sciences? (Creswell, 2013). There are two approaches to answering this, positivism or interpretivism. Positivists believe all rational assertions can be verified and that only valid knowledge is scientific. This philosophical system is based on logical or mathematical proof. "One of the features of positivism is precisely its postulate that scientific knowledge is the paradigm of valid knowledge" (Larrain, 1979 p. 197). It follows that in the social sciences positivism is objective and studied through quantitative approaches. The contrast to this approach is interpretivism. Interpretivists believe that before we can use the scientific method to understand a phenomenon, we first need to be aware of what that phenomenon is and how it is constructed. Interpretivists approach how we think about the social world in research and believe we first need to be aware of how our social world is shaped by concepts, ideas and language. The focus is on understanding the interpretative method employed (Macionis & Gerber, 2010). It follows that in the social sciences, interpretivism is studied through qualitative approaches. Subjective evidence is constructed from individual views, and researchers often try to work as closely as possible to the participants being studied (Creswell, 2013). Research is conducted in the "field" since knowledge is understood through the subjective experiences of people (Creswell, 2013). The constructs that impact ethical decision-making of high involvement products have been generalized in the literature from the constructs identified to impact ethical decision-making of low involvement products. The current research asserts that confirmation of these generalizations is needed in this field. Therefore, it will take a qualitative interpretative approach in studying the ethical decision-making of high involvement products.

### **3.3.2 World View**

Constructivism is often described as interpretivist and is considered to be a world view to understanding the meaning of reality. Social constructivism claims that knowledge and many aspects of the world around us do not be real and to only exist because we give meaning to them through social agreement (Macdonis & Gerber, 2010). Rather than starting with a theory (as positivism does), inquirers generate or inductively develop a method of a pattern of meaning (Creswell, 2013). It does not focus on the ontological status of things or how real they are; rather social constructivism examines how we gain knowledge from the world. Construction refers to knowledge or concepts rather than objects. To construct something is to, "make or form by combining or arranging parts or elements" (Construct, Merriam-Webster 2017). In other words, it is produced by people putting things together. Individuals seek understanding of the world in which they live and work and based on their experiences will develop meanings towards certain objects or ideas (Creswell, 2013). There can be multiple meanings which are often very diverse. This leads the researcher to study the complexity of views rather than narrowing meanings down to only a few categories or ideas (Creswell, 2013). They rely heavily on the participant's views of the overall situation (Creswell, 2013).

Since reality is socially constructed and people make sense of the world based on their social interactions, the goal of conducting research is to understand participants' views and their socially constructed realities on whatever is being studied. Therefore, research that aligns with social constructivism examines the "process" of the interaction and contexts within the research setting (Creswell, 2013). When studying under this method, participants must be approached with broad general questions so that they can construct the meaning of the situation through discussion and interaction. They also must recognise that they are an active participant in this method and therefore acknowledge that their personal views and past experiences shape their interpretations (Creswell, 2013). The intent is to make sense of the meanings assigned by their participants about the world or subject being studied. This intent is why it is referred to as interpretive research. The constructivist

worldview manifests in phenomenological studies, in which individuals describe their experiences.

### **3.4 Phenomenology**

Phenomenology falls within the interpretivist paradigm and is, simply put, the study of relations that exist between people and the world around them. It explores the different ways in which people experience or think about various phenomena (Marton, 1986). It does this by qualitatively mapping out and studying how people perceive, conceptualise, understand, and experience reality (Marton, 1986). Phenomenology's ontological assumptions are subjectivist; people socially construct their reality, and what they know and believe to be true about their world stems from their interactions with people within their social settings over time (LeCompte & Schensul, 1999). It is commonly used in the social sciences and often described as the study of experience.

The phenomenological enquiry of the current research has been identified as what people experience in the ethical consumption domain and how they interpret ethical consumption of high involvement and low involvement ethical products. It aims to understand how individuals commonly experience shopping for ethical products and determines the shared observations, interpretations, assumptions, perceptions, beliefs, and experiences that exist. A phenomenological approach is best suited to understanding this 'lived experience' (Marton and Booth, 1997). It can be achieved by either an interpretive or descriptive style by the researcher. In an interpretive approach, the researcher's insights into the participant's descriptions help create a story about the phenomena (Creswell, 2013). Similarly, in a descriptive approach, in addition to the researcher transposing their insights, meanings and interrelations are also examined through a rigorous process of dissecting the descriptions further (Svensson, 1997). The way people make sense of the world around them needs to be understood, and an effective way of understanding this is through description. The phenomenological method is not only rigorous but also useful in capturing similarities and differences so that researchers can understand the meaning experienced by different people



(Svensson, 1997). The following table demonstrates the data collection activities for phenomenology.

*Figure 10. Data Collection Activities –Phenomenology*

<b>Data Collection Activity</b>	<b>Phenomenology</b>
What is traditionally studied? (sites or individuals)	Multiple individuals who have experienced the phenomenon
What are typical access and rapport issues? (access and rapport)	Finding people who have experienced the phenomenon
How does one select a site or individuals to study? (purposeful sampling strategies)	Finding individuals who have experienced the phenomenon, a “criterion” sample
What type of information typically is collected? (forms of data)	Interviews with 5 to 25 people (Polkinghorne, 1989)
How is information recorded? (recording information)	Interviews, often multiple interviews with the same individuals
What are common data collection issues? (field issues)	Access to materials, authenticity of account and materials
How is information typically stored? (storing data)	File folders, computer files

Source: Creswell, 2013 pg. 148-149 Table 7.1

Phenomenology is a relatively young methodological approach. The following discussions will examine the founding fathers of phenomenology and will provide insight into the philosophical underpinnings that shaped this research discourse.

### **3.4.1 Transcendental Phenomenology**

One of the first phenomenological philosophers was German mathematician Edmund Husserl (1859-1938). He believed that experiences should be examined as they naturally occur (Marton & Booth, 1997). He was a significant contributor to understanding the cultural world and his work provided a number of valuable and attractive analyses (Cerbone, 2006). Husserl showed how philosophy is a distinct form of thinking and how it differed from other forms, in particular those of the various sciences and positivist worldviews. He did this through his discussion called the transcendental reduction, in which he

examined how we take up a stance which is different from all the partial and practical attitudes that we have. It introduced an element within the analysis which he coined, bracketing or reduction, where the researcher stands back and looks at the whole of things including their own being as part of the whole. In his many efforts to define this transcendental phenomenology, he connected back to classical philosophy, which theorised being as being, as it looked to the whole of things (Cerbone, 2006). In transcendental phenomenology, the intended meanings are conceived in human consciousness that is always directed towards something else, an object or another subject. Husserl was able to show how and why these analyses were not just empirical or psychological but also philosophical (Cerbone, 2006).

### ***3.4.2 Typification and Reciprocity of Perspectives***

Social psychology and phenomenological methods lie at the foundation of social constructivism. A notable contributor that linked Edmund Husserl's work to the social sciences is Alfred Schütz (Schütz, 1967). In 1944, Schütz published an article titled, "The Stranger: An Essay in Social Psychology" which characterised the situation of a stranger attempting to join what he coined as the "in group". In his essay, Schütz discussed the interaction process of adaptation and assimilation to the group, as well as the common interpretations of the world that were taken for granted by the group (Dreher, 2011). Schütz described the process in which a stranger would attempt to orientate themselves and interpret the cultural pattern of the social group they are approaching. Schütz examined how cultural patterns, such as morals, laws, habits, customs, etiquette, fashion etc., presented themselves to the person living within the group and their fellow peers (Dreher, 2011). Schütz believed that people were only interested in knowledge of the social world that related to their actions. This interest meant that people's knowledge was incoherent; it may only be partially organised under their particular plans for life, work, or leisure (Dreher, 2011). Furthermore, they would be only somewhat interested in the clarity of their knowledge (Schütz, 1944). They would consume without much thought, for example, they would be satisfied that a telephone service is available, or buy products at the store not knowing how they were produced (Banu, 2013). They would take it for granted that they

would be understood and would receive an answer accordingly when expressing their thoughts in plain language with their fellow peers. Finally, their knowledge was inconsistent and they may have different opinions on moral, political or economic matters (Dreher, 2011). This system of knowledge provided members of the “in group” with a reasonable chance of understanding and being understood. Members that have grown up within the group accept the standard scheme or cultural pattern that has been passed down to them by their ancestors, teachers, and authorities (Dreher, 2011). Schütz called these recipes for interpreting the social world (Schütz, 1944). Schütz presented these constructed cultural patterns by discussing how a stranger would be inadequate for interpreting the “in group” because they would lack them (Dreher, 2011).

One significant contribution of Schütz’s work is the critique of common sense knowledge which he claimed people took for granted when functioning in society or when researching events in the world (Cox, 2012). Schütz felt that these common sense understandings were socially constructed based on standard assumptions often referred to as something that is typical. The process of creating this standard (creating a typical way of understanding) is known as typification (McKinney, 1969). People create typifications and this helps them to function in society without having to think a lot about their day to day activities. In other words, they relied on common sense knowledge. Schütz recognises that there are also dominant factors which can have significant effects. Individuals will find themselves in what Schütz called, “biographically determined situations” (Cox, 2012). He recognised that no two people could experience the same situation in the same way, but stressed that people could escape from this biography. He described the means by which the individual orientates themselves as a stock of knowledge that they draw upon, thereby typifying the world (McKinney, 1969). Another important category that Schütz described is what he called the reciprocity of perspectives for everyday experiences (Cox, 2012). Reciprocity refers to the fact that an individual takes for granted the assumption that another individual would perceive things in the same way they do. Reciprocity of perspectives is necessary when conducting research as it shines a light on the importance of questioning the way the

interviewer and the interviewee see the world and the underlying assumptions that exist. Schütz's work highlights that although no two people can see the world in the same way, it is important to acknowledge the perspectives that they do share, and to develop a working model for how people understand events and activities in the world. Schütz views this not as a description of the world, but instead an interpretation of the world (Cox, 2012).

### **3.4.3 Phenomenology Research**

There are a variety of different methods relevant to phenomenology. When testing a new knowledge field, the most common techniques used are observations and interviews with human subjects. The current research sets out to identify participants of both low and high involvement product ethical decision-making, and to gain new insights into a domain that is not well known. It aims to gain findings from the field that currently cannot be explained through existing answers. The context is what defines the situation (LeCompte & Schensul, 1999). The tools of phenomenology are designed for discovery, and the researcher plays a pivotal role in the data collection. Through systematic observation and by conducting interviews in the field, they generate understandings and learn about the meanings that people attribute to the domain being observed (LeCompte & Schensul, 1999). The point of conducting field work is to provide the researcher with the opportunity to generate new knowledge and to be surprised by the findings. For this to happen, the researcher will need to not approach the study with pre-existing assumptions (Creswell, 2013). The emphasis is on allowing themes to emerge from the data rather than imposing meaning from existing knowledge. It is important that these assumptions are thought through before conducting the fieldwork. One cannot be surprised unless they already have pre-existing ideas and or assumptions that can be overturned.

An inductive, interactive, and recursive process is used in phenomenology to build theories and explain the meaning assigned to a behaviour that is being studied (LeCompte & Schensul, 1999). The study commences once the research questions and a series of related hunches, initial hypotheses, models and concepts have been established. The researcher is interested in studying

these relationships and will begin the first step in building theory through observations and interviews (LeCompte & Schensul, 1999).

The steps to collecting data occur after the researcher has identified the phenomena of interest to be studied and the research objectives and questions have been formed. These questions are what drives the methodology of choice and data collection approach. Phenomenology can use a wide variety of data collection; observations, journals, books, taped conversations and formally written responses. However, the most common method is the in-depth interview as this is seen as an effective way of understanding approaches involving contextual groups of people and data collection of the individual's description of understanding (Cerbone, 2006).

The researcher determines the number of participants necessary for the study based on what they believe will provide enough insight into the phenomena. After the initial set of interviews have been conducted, the researcher can add participants and continue doing interviews until saturation has been met (i.e. the responses are common and are no longer providing new insights) (Creswell, 2013). It is critical that the researcher's preconceptions and theoretical impositions do not influence the analysis. The researcher must be aware of their preconceptions and try to prevent this from happening through the questioning and analysis approach.

#### **3.4.4 *Building Rapport***

The researcher must become involved with members of the community or participants in the natural settings where they do research. Involvement means building trust between the researcher and the participant. It takes considerable time and effort and often calls for a special kind of relationship (Cerbone, 2006). Since building trust takes time, the process differs depending on how the researcher is perceived by the people they are studying. This process depends on whether the researcher is an insider, a member of the group, or an outsider (Cerbone, 2006). The relationship is determined by the group members as they may have an established rapport, be viewed as a partner, or be unknown (LeCompte & Schensul, 1999). In phenomenological

studies, gaining trust is often referred to as building rapport. Phenomenographers must build a relationship with members of the community so that they are accepted as someone who is trustable by participants within the setting of the research (LeCompte & Schensul, 1999). When the researcher is perceived as different from the community due to social class, culture, role, ethnicity etc., it takes even more time and effort to build rapport. The researcher may be unaware of their privilege, superior status, and other distinguishing characteristics that would act as a barrier to building trust within a particular setting (LeCompte & Schensul, 1999).

### **3.4.5 Reflexivity**

During the research process, it is important that the researcher maintains a sense of their history, subjectivity and potential influence (Willis, 2013). The current research is value-laden and axiological as it examines ethics through values in the ethical consumption domain (Axiology, Merriam-Webster 2017). The researcher must discuss values that shape the narrative, and during bracketing, they write about their interpretations as well as the interpretations of participants (Creswell, 2013). There must be a commitment to providing the views and perspectives of the participants accurately within the research (LeCompte and Schensul, 1999). One way to ensure this is to create an atmosphere of trust so that the participants feel safe, enabling them to share their opinions authentically. Current practice makes it the responsibility of the researcher to ensure that all voices in the study are included in the text of the study (LeCompte and Schensul, 1999).

Reflexivity is an ability to evaluate oneself. It is important to reflect on biases and preconceptions so that they do not influence the research, potentially resulting in biased interpretations of the data. Bracketing is the actual process of setting aside one's own experiences, biases, and preconceived notions about the research topic. Being reflexive and conducting bracketing is vital in qualitative research in order to understand the views of the participants without concern that their views may have been manipulated and made to fit those of the researcher. Bracketing is not only the researcher setting aside biases and experiences, but it is also setting aside previous research findings, theories

and personal knowledge about the research topic at hand. It is important to bracket previous knowledge because even though knowledge is not necessarily a bias, it can influence how the researcher looks at that data, thus potentially twisting that data into what other previous research studies have found (Creswell, 2013).

Bracketing has been viewed as a three-step process. First, a dialogue takes place before the research project begins. For example, the researcher can talk with colleagues about their personal biases, experiences, and past knowledge about the research topic etc. Afterwards, these ideas are written down. When this information is written down, it is considered to have been "bracketed" (Chan et al., 2013). Second, memos are taken, or a bracketing journal is used during data collection, analysis, and the writing up of the final research report. These notes or journal entries occur when the researcher senses a bias or a preconceived notion arising in their mind. These entries should happen throughout the whole research process (Chan et al., 2013). Bracketing helps the researcher to be sure that they are keeping their biases and preconceived notions in check and that they have a record to reflect on throughout the project. Finally, the researcher writes down their biases, past experiences and previous knowledge on the topic in the final research report itself (Chan et al., 2013). Including this information in the final report allows the audience to be aware of the researcher's biases as they reflect on the results and interpretations of data (Chan et al., 2013).

#### **3.4.6 Interviewing**

The qualitative interview is widely accepted as one of the most applied forms of social inquiry. In addition to observation and participation, language is also critical in all field studies. Though inevitable, it may seem odd and contradictory to use language as the primary means of exchange in a field with an approach that is trying to relate and affect the senses rather than the intellect (LeCompte and Schensul, 1999).

The advantage for face-to-face interviews is to gain more detailed information surrounding motivations, knowledge, and beliefs and tends to result in a higher

percentage of completed answers (Malhotra, 2010). This method was chosen for the current research as the purpose was to gain more detailed information into the ethical consumption decision-making process. The flexibility of this approach to clarify questions is important due to the nature of the research approach and questions. One of the strengths of using the in-depth semi-structured interview method is the degree of information that can be obtained. The conversation allows the interviewer to provide clarification when needed and to explore ideas further (in conversation) that typically might not appear with other methods. Participants would be less likely to have a bias compared to a focus group where they may conform to the opinions of others (Punch, 2005). Some weaknesses that go along with in-depth interviews is that in some instances responses can be hard to interpret, or the interviewer might read into an answer based on identified ideas that they hoped to gain from the interview. Another drawback is that it is expensive and not efficient. Unlike surveys, this technique would not be sufficient when gathering information from a large population (Punch, 2005).

Thoughtful interview question development is critical in reducing researcher bias, and this is also true for data generation since this makes up the bulk of the data for the study (Punch, 2005). Each question must be carefully worded, ensuring that they do not assume anything about the subject's experience and do not lead the participant towards an answer. This is also ensured with a comfortable setting and a good rapport between the researcher and respondent. The researcher is there to listen and must allow the interviewee to speak openly. The benefits from gathering data in-person are that the researcher can record all of the observable nuances as well as the verbal answers that are given.

#### **3.4.7 *Descriptive Phenomenology***

Once the interviews have been completed, they are transcribed in their entirety. Next, a phenomenological data analysis, which sorts perceptions that emerge from the data collected into specific categories or themes takes place (Cerbone, 2006). The data analysis aims to articulate the interviewee's reflections on experience and to identify common conceptions of experience



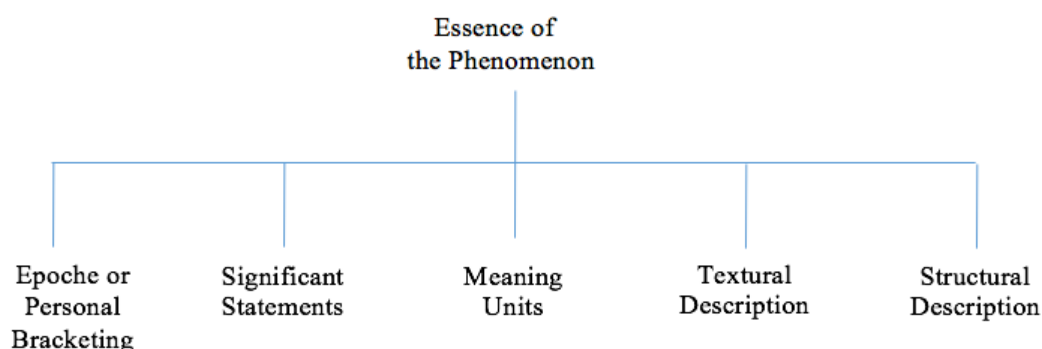
rather than individual experience (Marton & Booth, 1997). The current research used descriptive phenomenology, and this rigorous process of dissecting the descriptions further includes reading the interviews, highlighting and dividing statements into meaningful themes and context. These units of data are then clustered together by grouping them based on similarities to form further meanings. These clusters are then rigorously examined, and variations are tested out to explore possible changes and eliminate meanings that are not necessary to identify the phenomenon. This process involves continual sorting, comparing and reporting of data and the developing categories of description. These categories are considered to be the primary outcomes and are the most significant result of phenomenological research (Marton and Booth, 1997). These categories become the phenomenological essence of the phenomenon. They are the primary outcomes and are the most significant result of phenomenological research. Phenomenological categories are logically related to one another, typically by way of hierarchically inclusive relationships, although linear and branched relationships can also occur. This process continues until these clusters are exhausted, and the researcher has tested how far they can be stretched before losing their identity (Marton and Booth, 1997). The process is group oriented and focuses on the variation of perceptions of the phenomenon by the interviewee. It is accomplished by analysing all the data together through this iterative and comparative process (Cerbone, 2006). During the final stage, the researcher elaborates and presents the findings of the phenomenon through a detailed written description.

Phenomenology categorises their subjects' descriptions, and these categorisations are the primary outcomes of phenomenological research. Two issues are involved here. First, the results of interpretivism view culture as both cognitive and affective, as reflected in shared meanings and as expressed in common language, symbols, and other modes of communication. Second, they believe that culture is created in a process as many individuals share or negotiate multiple and overlapping socially based interpretations of what they do and what occurs in local situations (LeCompte & Schensul, 1999). Culture,

then, is an abstract “construct” put together or “constructed” as people interact with each other and participate in shared activities.

The following figure illustrates coding categories of phenomenological research.

*Figure 11. Template for Coding a Phenomenological Study*



Source: Creswell, 2013 pg. 207 Figure 8.4

### 3.5 Methodological Foundation Summary

The gap between intention to purchase versus purchasing behaviour in the ethical decision-making domain has been a constant theme of this thesis. This identified gap has been the foundation that led to the study of ethical consumption culture and the patterns of behaviour. What is not understood is the relationship that exists between people and ethical consumption in both high and low product involvement levels. The current research aims to study the constructs that influence ethical decision making. It aims to map out the different ways in which people perceive, conceptualise and understand this consumption domain. It is for this reason that a phenomenological approach will be executed and in-depth open-ended interviews will be the method of choice.

The underlying philosophical assumptions in the current research lend themselves to a qualitative approach. Consumers are influenced by constructs which shape their decision-making process. Low involvement ethical products have been extensively studied and constructs have been identified within the

research. Therefore, there exists a plethora of quantitative studies attempting to measure the impact that these constructs have in decision making. Some of these examples were discussed in the earlier literature review found in Chapter 2. What has not been extensively researched is the ethical decision-making process when purchasing a high involvement ethical product. Within this domain, not all constructs are known nor identified in the literature. For this reason, the current research will take a qualitative approach to this field. The researcher explores the notion of multiple realities through the study of participants' individual perception of the world how they each experience phenomena. This needs to be taken into consideration when observing this construction of reality. The researcher will empirically study the subjects to learn about their views and identify constructs that are unique to this domain. This method will allow the researcher to address the research questions and objectives that drive the study.

### **3.6 Research Approach**

The research was undertaken in two main phases, encompassing four empirical studies as summarised in the following figure, Stages of Research Process. A sequential research design was employed to allow the inductive Phase 1 Exploratory Studies to inform the development of the subsequent Phase 2 Main Studies. Based on the literature review, the Ethical Elaboration and Product Involvement Framework (EEPIF) was developed and proposed as a way to explore the different levels of involvement in ethical decision-making. This literature review revealed the need to study high involvement ethical product domain (the upper right quadrant of the EEPIF) that has been under-researched. Qualitative methodology can be described as being either 'structure-before' or 'structure-after' with its design (Punch, 2005). 'Structure-before' is when codes or categories are imposed by the researcher onto the data. 'Structure-after' allows the participant to tell their own terms (Punch, 2005). There are pros and cons to using both approaches. Having 'structure before' more easily allows for standardized comparisons. By having 'structure after' people provide information on their own terms, and the meanings and understandings that they are familiar with naturally appear (Punch, 2005). For all four studies a 'structure after' design was employed. While the four studies

were mostly qualitative and inductive, consisting of observations and interviews, Study 1 (Phase 1 Exploratory) employed a mixed-methods approach to the questionnaire design.

Study 1 was conducted to explore the low involvement domain, and a questionnaire was designed based on the context that was found within the literature. This included having respondents provide answers to already established questions, as well as respond to follow up interviews that consisted of semi-structured questions. The findings from the survey provided new insights into the identified constructs that influence buying behaviour. When survey responses were cross-analysed with household income, it was discovered that those belonging to a lower household income identified new constructs that did not exist within the literature. The study identified constructs that aligned with the literature and also insights that did not align with the literature. This informed the research design and methodology of Study 3 as questions that were structured based on past literature were not capturing this unknown information. Therefore, more open-ended questions were implemented for Study 3. Since the consumers from the low household income demographic category in Study 1 did not align with the literature, this information informed the additional study (Study 3) to be conducted again at farmers' markets however this time at six different locations throughout the week, capturing a more diverse cross-section participant pool. Study 2 (Phase 1 Exploratory) also informed by the proposed framework, this time focused on the high product involvement and high ethical elaboration top right quadrant. This study was conducted using semi-structured interviews and discovered further insights into the constructs that impact ethical decision-making, as well as the overall experience consumers had within this consumption domain. A comparison and thematic analysis of Study 1 and Study 2 provided insights which informed the Phase 2 Main Studies (Study 3 and Study 4).

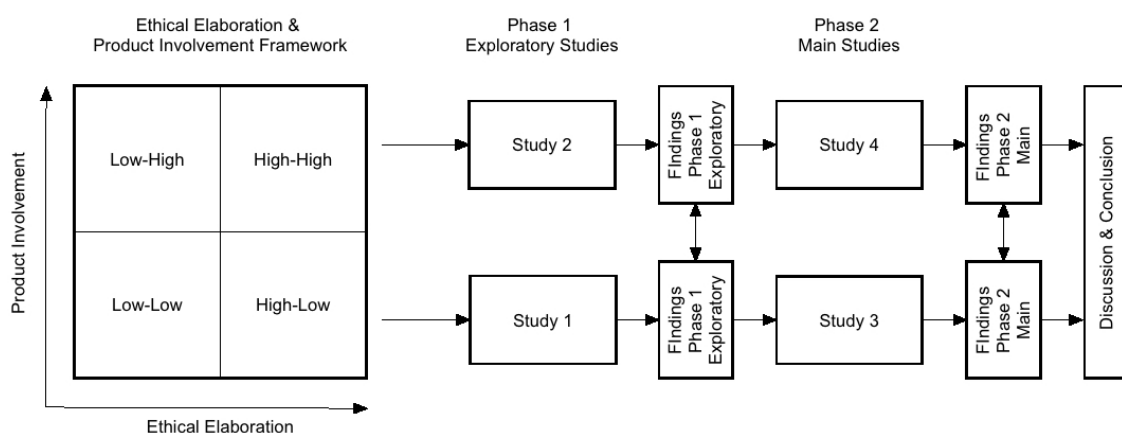
Study 3 (Phase 2 Main) in the low involvement ethical decision-making domain was designed based on the insights from Study 1. This study included more open-ended and longer interview questions to more vendor and consumer respondents and provided further insight into the constructs and the decision-

making phenomena. Study 4 (Phase 2 Main) in the high ethical product involvement domain was also informed by the findings from Phase 1 Exploratory Study 2. It demonstrated that the semi-structured questions addressing the constructs found in the literature were too narrow in scope which resulted with findings that aligned with the literature from those questions. However, the more open-ended questions identified new information regarding this phenomenon. The findings demonstrated that there was unknown information beyond the literature that needed to be explored. Study 1, therefore informed the methodology for Study 4, which led to a more robust interview process consisting of open-ended questions examining consumers and realtors that sell homes with sustainable or energy efficient features.

An analysis examining the findings of all four studies through a phenomenological approach and a sequential review of themes was conducted. An inductive philosophical approach has been adopted within this mostly qualitative framework to allow the benefits of each method to be fully embraced (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004).

The following figure is an illustration of the stages in the research process.

*Figure 12. Stages of Research Process*

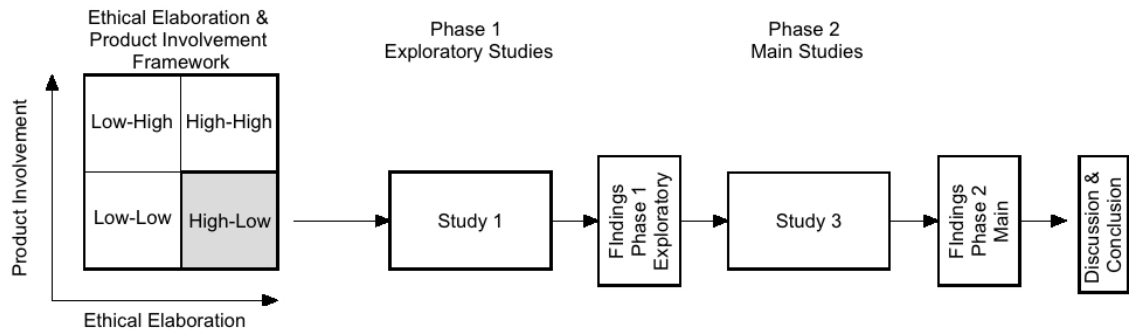


Understanding the individual and cultural commonalities of how consumers construct meaning and perceive information that impacts the decision-making

process was the essence of the application of the research. The decision-making process of purchasing routinised ethical products that require limited additional information (low involvement) was considered to be a subcategory that is referred to as the Low Involvement Ethical Consumption Domain (Study 1 and Study 3). These products consisted of produce and other items at farmers' markets that were local, organic, chemical free, and/or fair-trade etcetera. The participants from these studies were consumers shopping at farmers' markets and vendors who sell their produce at the farmers' markets. This domain will be elaborated on and discussed throughout the research procedure descriptions.

The following figure depicts the Low Involvement Ethical Consumption Domain.

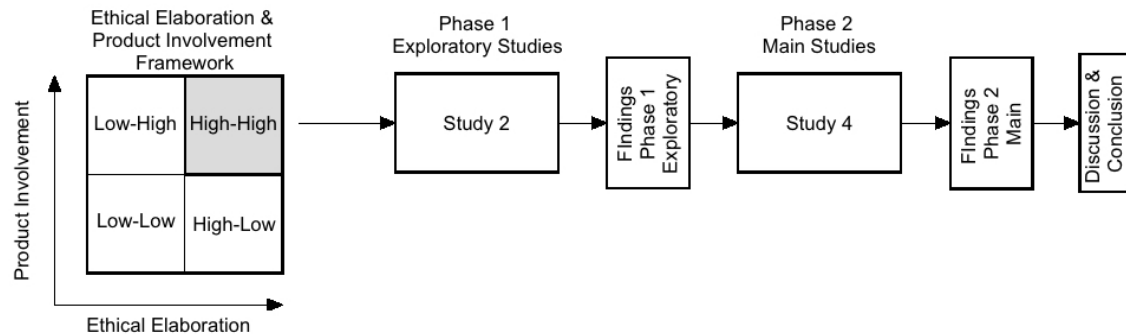
*Figure 13. Low Involvement Ethical Consumption Research Process*



The decision-making process of purchasing unfamiliar ethical items that require extended problem solving (high involvement), also considered to be a subcategory, is referred to as the High Involvement Ethical Consumption Domain (Study 2 and Study 4). This domain interviewed consumers shopping for a house with sustainable or energy efficient features and realtors who sell houses with sustainable or energy efficient features. Similar to the Low Involvement Ethical Consumption Domain, this domain is also elaborated on and discussed throughout the research procedure descriptions.

The following figure depicts the High Involvement Ethical Consumption Domain.

*Figure 14. High Involvement Ethical Consumption Research Process*



For both involvement levels, buyers (consumers) and sellers (vendors or realtors) were selected as the subjects for the research studies. In order to understand the ethical decision-making phenomena, consumers were chosen, as they are the ethical decision makers and vendors and realtors were chosen, as they contribute to the lived experience. By interviewing these two groups, meaning was constructed through the intentions expressed and behaviour manifested by the participants through the activities that they participate in within these experiences.

Within each involvement level domain an exploratory study was first conducted, Study 1 in the low involvement domain and Study 2 in the high involvement domain. After an analysis of the results and reflection of the findings, two additional studies were conducted in Phase 2, Study 3 in the low involvement domain and Study 4 the high involvement domain. These four studies were conducted using a phenomenological approach and thematic analysis. The remainder of this chapter will first discuss social desirability bias, the building of rapport with participants and the researcher's epoche (bracketing) which were considered for all four studies. This will be followed by a discussion of the research procedures of the exploratory and main studies within each domain, starting with the low involvement ethical consumption domain (Study 1 and Study 3) and followed by the high involvement ethical consumption domain (Study 2 and Study 4).

### **3.6.1 *Social Desirability Bias***

As discussed in Chapter 2, many previous studies have identified a persistent gap that exists between consumers' attitudes and their actual purchasing behaviour (Cowe & Williams, 2000; Young et al., 2010; McEachern et al., 2010; Shaw et al., 2005). Social desirability bias within the research design is seen as a reason for this gap (Cowe & Williams, 2000). The issues with social desirability within the research design have been described as an, "over-reporting of ethical actions by research respondents seeking to give the 'right' answer" (Calvin & Lewis, 2000 pg. 185). In an attempt to reduce the impact of social desirability bias, the researcher deemed it necessary to not disclose the research topic to the participants prior to commencing the interviews. Instead, participants were informed of the larger research theme (consumer decision-making), and questions related to ethical consumption were introduced after more general consumption question had been asked. Therefore, a partially covert approach was adopted.

Covert research approaches have been widely criticised by academics stating that ethical implications exist due to a lack of formal consent, invasion of privacy and risks to the participants due to a disregard of their right to not be studied (Blumer, 1982). These critics state that the participants should be fully included in an honest representation of the research and they see this as an essential principle of research. Pragmatists, on the other hand, take into consideration the context of the research and the practical reasons for utilising the covert approach to justify using this method (Lugosi, 2006). To address the well-cited attitude-behaviour gap, this researcher deemed it necessary to withhold some information regarding the study's intent from participants. The personal risk to the participants was deemed as low and this was due to the nature of the data collected, the consent gained prior to the commencement of the interviews and the disclosure of the main topic upon conclusion of the interviews.

### **3.6.2 *Building Rapport***

Without a strong rapport, participants might withhold or distort information, or not present their normal behaviour, or give socially acceptable responses to



questions, thus biasing the data they provide to the researcher. For these reasons, the researcher considered building relationships to be important and spent her time in building rapport among the participants. She built relationships with the mutually exclusive subgroups that were interviewed for the study. Although the interviews took approximately 10-30 minutes to conduct, the time spent building rapport with each participant ranged anywhere from 40 minutes to 80 minutes. This process included talking about non-research related issues, common interests, or friends. For the low involvement domain, the researcher built relationships with both vendors and consumers at the farmers' market before conducting interviews and scheduled interviews with the vendors a week in advance. For the high involvement domain, the researcher prearranged interviews sometimes two weeks prior to a meeting and corresponded with participants prior to the interview process. The researcher acknowledged that potential perceived power and superior status could impact interview responses, and therefore chose to build rapport with unknown brokerages and not access realtors through a family contact. Sales representatives were contacted by the builder, Reid's Heritage Homes and the letter ensured that volunteers would be anonymous. For Phase 1 the process extended over a 4-week period and for Phase 2 the process extended over a 6-week period.

### **3.6.3 *Epoche***

Reflexivity is an important reflection on biases and preconceptions. This reflection is useful in ensuring that biased interpretations are not made about the data. Reflexivity is the ability to evaluate oneself, and epoche also known as bracketing is the actual process of setting aside personal experiences, biases, and preconceived notions about the research topic. This process is vital in qualitative research so that the opinions of the participants are understood and not made to fit into the researcher's preconceived views. Throughout the research process, the researcher noted whenever a bias or preconceived notion arose. This ensured that biases were acknowledged and brought under control throughout the research process. The following will discuss the researcher's biases and experiences as well as personal

knowledge of previous research findings and theories about the research topic.

The researcher acknowledges that the topic was chosen due to her personal interest in this domain. She self-identifies as a socially conscious consumer who often considers the externalised impact that products have on the environment and people when evaluating consumption decisions. The researcher believes that society must not only adjust what they buy but also alter our relationship with consumption to combat climate change. She is hopeful that new technologies, which are providing consumers with environmentally friendly options, will assist in moving individual and society towards a smaller ecological footprint. She believes that the higher involvement ethical products such as sustainable and energy efficient homes and electric cars have been underdeveloped and overlooked domains that hold the potential to make a positive change towards curbing per capita emissions. She believes that knowledge and time are vitally important in order to change society's approach to consumption. In her spare time, she runs an environmental mentorship program within her community. The researcher acknowledges her above-mentioned biases and made note of them throughout the research process by recording messages to herself on her smartphone. Effort to ensure that potentially personal biases and views were kept top of mind during the research process, as well as considerations made to shape the research approach, were considered to be integral in reducing biases.

### **3.7 Low Involvement Ethical Consumption Domain**

Low involvement ethical decision-making studies were conducted at farmers' markets in Southern Ontario, Canada. As discussed in the literature review in Chapter 2, the intention–behaviour gap endures. This research explored the gap in the low involvement domain by gaining new insights into the constructs that influence ethical decision-making through exploratory observations, questionnaires, and semi-structured interviews, followed by in-depth interviews in the main study. The broader research questions were addressed by consumers and vendors. This approach was effective in understanding the

gap from the consumers' point of view and the vendor interviews provided insight into the 'lived experience'. Although vendors did not necessarily go through the same decision-making process, they provided valuable insight into the constructs that impact behaviour. A rigorous thematic analysis was conducted after each study.

The following discusses where the research took place and how it was conducted for the low involvement ethical consumption domain. The discussion outlines the steps in the research process and within each step details of both Study 1 (Phase 1 Exploratory) and Study 3 (Phase 2 Main) are described. Study 1 and Study 3 both belong to the low involvement domain, therefore, the steps within the research process are often similar and when applicable commonalities will be addressed to avoid redundancy.

### ***3.7.1 Phase 1 Exploratory Study Procedure (Study 1)***

Study 1 explored the factors that influence ethical consumption through examining routinised low involvement products with ethical features. The study took place at two established farmers' markets; in the City of Guelph and the City of Hamilton in Southern Ontario, Canada. The qualitative investigation included carrying out observations at the locations and semi-structured interviews with vendors and consumers. A survey was also administered to consumers. See Appendix A for the Study 1 research related documents.

### ***3.7.2 Phase 2 Main Study Procedure (Study 3)***

Study 3 further investigates how ethical decision-making is experienced as well as factors that influence the ethical consumption of routinised low involvement products. The study took place at six different farmers' markets in Southern Ontario, Canada: the City of Guelph, the City of Hamilton, St. Jacobs Market, Dundas Market, Rockwood Market, and Cambridge Market. The qualitative investigation included a total of twenty-five in-depth interviews with vendors (N=15) and consumers (N=10). See Appendix C for the Study 3 research related documents.

The following discusses the procedures for both Study 1 (Phase 1 Exploratory) and Study 3 (Phase 2 Main) including: sample, implementation, and data management and analyses.

### **3.7.3 Sample**

The following discusses who the researcher chose to study and how they were contacted for the low involvement ethical consumption domain. It first describes Study 1 (Phase 1 Exploratory) and then addresses Study 3 (Phase 2 Main).

Conscious consumers and the people who sell ethical products were identified in the literature as ideal participants for studying ethical shopping behaviour. Conscious consumers seek ethical, social and/or economic alternatives when purchasing products (McEachern et al., 2010). Several studies have examined conscious consumer behaviour at farmers' markets as these locations provide an atmosphere for conscious consumption (McEachern et al., 2010; Carrington et al., 2010).

For Study 1 (Phase 1 Exploratory), the interviews and surveys took place at two farmers' markets. The total number of interviews was determined once the answers given to the chosen questions reached a saturation level. Thus, six semi-structured interviews were conducted with vendors and six semi-structured interviews were conducted with buyers. Twenty-five questionnaires were also administered at the farmers' market to the 'conscious consumers' shopping at the location.

Upon reflection of the findings from Study 1 (Phase 1 Exploratory), it was determined that a broader demographic should be interviewed for Study 3 (Phase 2 Main). For this reason, interviews for Study 3 took place at six different farmers' markets on various days of the week throughout Southern Ontario, Canada. Study 3 also took a more open-ended approach to the research and conducted ten in-depth interviews with consumers and fifteen in-depth interviews with vendors.

### **3.7.4 Implementation**

The following discusses where the studies took place and how the research was conducted for the low involvement ethical consumption domain. Study 1 (Phase 1 Exploratory) will first be described, followed by Study 3 (Phase 2 Main).

#### **3.7.4.1 Observation**

To examine the market in a non-intrusive manner, as unstructured observation first occurred allowing the researcher to determine categories and classifications (Punch, 2005). Observations took place for Study 1 at the Guelph Farmers' Market and at the Hamilton Farmers' Market and captured patterns of vendor behaviours, consumer behaviours and buyer-seller interactions. The observations attempted to account for the appeal of shopping at the farmers' market and to identify driving factors that motivate conscious consumers to shop there. Observations occurred over two days and were documented using written and audio-taped notes. This information was revisited during the analysis stage to compare findings and themes among the other research methods. The unstructured observation was seen as the best method for observing natural behaviour while interviews and questionnaires were implemented to further explore consumers' opinions and beliefs.

#### **3.7.4.2 Interviews**

The qualitative interview is widely accepted as one of the most applied forms of social inquiry. Malhotra (2010) stated that the advantages for face-to-face interviews are to gain more detailed information surrounding motivations, knowledge, and beliefs, and tend to result in a higher percentage of completed answers. This method was chosen for Study 1 to gain more detailed information into ethical decision-making. The flexibility to clarify questions with this method was essential due to the exploratory nature of the study. Interviews were conducted with six vendors and six consumers at the farmers' market. The questions directed towards the consumers were to identify factors that drove them to shop at the farmers' market and the questions directed towards the vendors were to gain insight into why they believed consumers shopped at the farmers' market and at their stalls. Similarly, this method was

also chosen for Study 3 (Main). For this study, interviews were conducted with fifteen vendors and ten consumers, however questions were more open-ended in nature. In an attempt to reduce researcher bias, the researcher reflected on their own ideas and awareness of pre-existing values. This was considered to reduce researcher influence.

The vendor interviewees were determined by the researcher after she identified shops that sold products listed as having ethical features such as organic, local, or chemical free. Introductions were made and relationships were established after some discussion about the research study and topic. For Study 1, consent forms were signed and interviews were booked over a two-week time span between 6:00 am -7:00 am on Saturday mornings in the City of Guelph and on a Tuesday morning in the City of Hamilton. For Study 3, consent forms were signed and interviews were booked over a four-week timespan between 6:00 am -7:00 am on Saturday mornings in the following cities: The City of Guelph, the City of Hamilton, St. Jacobs Market, Dundas Market, Rockwood Market, and Cambridge Market. These were seen as convenient times for the vendors as this was after they had set up their products, but before the customers arrived at the market. The interviews conducted with vendors were held at the participant's stand at the farmers' markets. For Study 1, they ranged in duration from 5.1 minutes to 8.3 minutes and the discussion schedule was semi-structured in nature. For Study 3, they ranged in duration from 9.4 minutes to 22.1 minutes and were more open-ended.

Similarly, for Study 1 and Study 3 interviews conducted with consumers were held at a central location where people gathered to eat and drink coffee at the same farmers' markets. Consumers were approached and introductions were made. Those interested in participating signed the consent forms and interviews commenced shortly afterwards. For Study 1, they ranged in duration from 7.4 minutes to 9.1 minutes and the discussion schedule was semi-structured in nature. For Study 3, they ranged in duration from 14.2 minutes to 26.5 minutes, but were more open-ended in nature.

#### **3.7.4.3 Survey**

As mentioned in Phase 1 Exploratory Study Procedure (Study 1), a questionnaire was designed for conscious consumers who shop at the farmers' market with the aim of identifying driving factors that motivate conscious consumers to buy produce at the market. Therefore, the surveys were conducted in the field at farmers' markets. This approach has proven to improve the response rate and the quality of data collected (Punch, 2005). In order to solicit consumer respondents, the researcher was located in the central seating area where people gathered to read the newspapers and sit down for lunch.

Respondents were approached in a professional manner directly by the researcher and were informed about the broad research topic and those interested signed consent forms. All participants filled out the survey at the central coffee tables in the centre of the Guelph Farmers' Market. The survey was presented to participants in a pen and paper format. There was a very high response rate of 89% (25 people from the 28 people who were asked). The sample was drawn from the Guelph Farmers' Market only, so that statements could potentially be made about the whole target population (Punch, 2005).

#### **3.7.5 Data Management and Analysis**

The following discusses how the data was captured, where it was kept and how it was coded and analysed for the low involvement ethical consumption domain. Study 1 (Phase 1 Exploratory) will first be described, followed by Study 3 (Phase 2 Main).

##### **3.7.5.1 Observation**

After conducting the observation, research questions were tested against the findings. The research questions: *Were there similarities? Were there observations supporting the findings from the consumers and vendors? Would anything interesting be observed when attempting to only document the natural day-to-day occurrences?* An unstructured observation allowed the researcher to observe actions and behaviours with limited

misunderstanding or misinterpretation. An interpretive account of the observation was recorded manually through note writing. Coding was used to group the data and a thematic analysis was implemented by grouping common topics together, applying short sentences and then words to describe the content. These themes were then analysed on paper by drawing and writing about the relationship between the themes. They were then grouped together based on these identified relationships. While coding the observation, the researcher was constantly theorising the write-up of ideas about codes and their relationships (Punch, 2005). Information was then abstracted and compared to other identified concepts and themes. A more detailed explanation can be found in Chapter 4, Findings. The identified intention-behaviour gap that has been widely discussed within the ethical consumption literature drove this study to examine the behaviour of people, what they actually did, and how they actually acted. This was consistent for both Study 1 (Phase 1 Exploratory) and Study 3 (Phase 2 Main).

#### **3.7.5.2 Interviews**

The interviews were captured on a recording device that were downloaded to MP3 files and transferred to an encrypted computer in a locked office building. For Study 1, verbatim transcripts were typed out using headphones and a start and stop technique. The transcriptions did not have any identifying data. Once transcribed, a translation of text approach was used and this developed an interpretive account through key phrases, metaphors, and patterns of meaning (Thompson, 1997). The researcher identified recurring themes around the benefits of selling at the farmers' market and the motivating factors that shaped consumers shopping behaviour. Some relevant issues emerged, which helped to shed light on the behaviour of the conscious consumer. Given the limited nature of this exploratory study and the relatively small sample size, it would be unwise to generalize the findings too widely (Punch, 2005). However, pertinent issues did emerge, which informed the methodology for the main study.

For Study 3, the interviews were captured on a recording device that were downloaded to MP3 files and transcribed by a third-party company. These



verbatim transcripts did not consist of any identifying information and were stored on an encrypted computer in a locked office. These transcripts were entered into the Computer Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis Software (CAQDAS) package NVivo. Within this software, the data was manually coded and an interpretive account was developed through key phrases, metaphors, and patterns of meaning (Thompson, 1997). It is worth mentioning that a debate exists within the qualitative research literature regarding the use of software packages such as NVivo. Some authors criticise that the researcher will lose their holistic view of interpretive qualitative data when it is being processed through a software package and will use more quantitative analytical tools which are seen to be positive in nature (Seidel, 1991; Coffey et al., 1996; Roberts & Wilson, 2002). However, these criticisms can be avoided by approaching such instruments as organisational tools to aid in assorting, retrieving, and displaying themes within the transcriptions, as opposed to using them for analytical reasons. NVivo was used to code the data for Study 3 and the relevant information was organized in themes (or nodes as referred to in the NVivo software). All nodes/themes were labelled, described, and accompanied by a reflection note. These nodes/themes were then grouped hierarchically from sub-categories (called child nodes in the software package) to broader categories (broader category child nodes) to finally overarching themes (referred to as parent nodes within the software package). A thematic analysis was used to thematically organize and analyse the data. The process was repetitious and consisted of reading and rereading the transcriptions, allowing the key nodes/themes to be identified and the data to be coded accordingly (Crabtree & Miller, 1999).

#### **3.7.5.3 Survey**

The main strength of this method is that the information gathered, if designed correctly, can be quantified to show factual data. It would have been very difficult and time consuming to interview twenty-five consumers. This survey was particularly good at producing precise information from larger populations (Punch, 2005). However, weakness with this form of data gathering are that any confusion related to a question cannot be clarified unless the researcher is present and able to answer questions. Surveys are artificial and there is a

risk that people's answers to the questionnaire may not reflect their true feelings or actions (Punch, 2005).

The questionnaires collected a wide range of factual information and therefore a multivariable survey was designed using the semantic differential approach (Punch, 2005). The survey was designed to further explore the participant's decision-making process and they were asked to respond to different concepts using rating scales. Likert scales allowed information to be quantified and analysed further. The survey consisted of twenty questions: fifteen shopping behaviour questions and five participant demographic questions. Analyses provided deeper insights into the results as data was analysed through spreadsheets using Microsoft Excel for Mac Version 15.32. Graphical figures were created out of the analyses for ease of interpretation.

### **3.8 High Involvement Ethical Consumption Domain**

Sustainable and energy efficient homes are emerging within the Canadian market and since this phenomenon is new, qualitative methods were used as they are widely accepted as one of the most applied forms of social enquiry. Since this research studied a new home subcategory, in a contemporary context, the phenomenological study method was employed (Yin, 2009). Phenomenology is a qualitative approach in which the investigator explores experiences, meanings, and interpretations of phenomena. Data collection was extensive, and drew on information from observations and interviews (Creswell, 2013). The following is an exploratory study for the first stage of this data collection.

The current research investigated consumer decision-making predominantly through qualitative methodology, utilizing interviews with Realtors and Sales Representatives that sell homes with a variety of features including sustainability and energy efficiency in Kitchener-Waterloo-Cambridge-Guelph (KWCG) area in Southern Ontario, Canada. The research questions were addressed through empirical research designed to further identify themes that constituted barriers to ethical consumption of high involvement SEE homes.

High involvement ethical decision-making studies were conducted at building development show rooms, real estate offices as well as over the phone in southern Ontario, Canada. As discussed in the literature review in Chapter 2, the high involvement ethical decision-making domain has been widely under researched. The current research explores the intention–behaviour gap within the high involvement domain and gains new insights into ethical decision-making through exploratory observations and semi-structured interviews, as well as in the main study, through in-depth interviews. A rigorous thematic analysis was conducted after each study. The broader research questions were addressed by consumers and realtors. This approach was effective in understanding the gap from the consumers' point of view and the realtor interviews provided insight into the 'lived experience'. Although realtors did not necessarily go through the same decision-making process, they provided valuable insight into the constructs that impact behaviour.

The following discusses where the research took place and how it was conducted for the high involvement ethical consumption domain. The discussion outlines the steps in the research process and within each step details of both Study 2 (Phase 1 Exploratory) and Study 4 (Phase 2 Main) are described. Study 2 and Study 4 both belong to the high involvement domain, therefore, the steps within the research process are often similar and when applicable commonalities will be addressed to avoid redundancy.

### ***3.8.1 Phase 1 Exploratory Study Procedure (Study 2)***

Study 2 investigated how ethical decision-making was experienced as well as the factors that influenced ethical consumption of high involvement products with ethical features. The study took place at building development show rooms and real estate offices in the City of Guelph in southern Ontario, Canada. The qualitative investigation included one observation and semi-structured interviews with realtors and consumers. See Appendix B for the Study 2 research related documents.

### **3.8.2 Phase 2 Main Study Procedure (Study 4)**

Study 4 investigated how ethical decision-making was experienced as well as the factors that influenced ethical consumption of high involvement products with ethical features. The realtor interviews took place at building development showrooms and real estate offices in the City of Guelph, Kitchener, and Fergus in southern Ontario, Canada. The qualitative investigation included in-depth interviews with vendors and consumers. See Appendix D for the Study 4 research related documents.

The following discusses the procedures for Study 2 (Phase 1 Exploratory) and Study 4 (Phase 2 Main) including; sample, implementation, and data management and analyses.

### **3.8.3 Sample**

The following discusses who was chosen to participate in the study and how they were contacted for the high involvement ethical consumption domain. It first describes Study 2 (Phase 1 Exploratory) and then addresses Study 4 (Phase 2 Main).

The current research identified factors that consumers favoured when purchasing a home with SEE features and what status background of the developer was taken into consideration during the decision-making process. After considering the builder reputation influence, it was decided that the consumer interviews would be conducted over the phone. The criteria used to determine the consumer participant included someone who had experienced purchasing at least one home and was expecting to purchase another within their lifetime. The realtors that were chosen to be interviewed were associated with the Canadian Real Estate Association, a professional affiliation for real estate agents in Canada. They all held a real estate license, or were working in real estate development with a real estate license (this was the case with sales representatives).

Reid's Heritage Homes emailed a letter that was written by the researcher to sales representatives and real estate agents in seeking participant volunteers

for Study 2 (Phase 1 Exploratory) and also for Study 4 (Phase 2 Main). The letter broadly described the aim and nature of the study, the methodology and who would benefit from the findings. It also provided interested volunteers with the email and phone number of the researcher so that they could contact her on their own free will and covered details about the compensation and the participant's rights to withdraw. The Consent to Participate in Research document, was also attached to the email which provided further information for Study 2 (Phase 1 Exploratory) titled, Understanding and Improving Decisions Regarding Sustainable and Energy Efficient (SEE) Homes and Study 4 (Phase 2 Main) titled, High versus Low Involvement: A Comparison Between Ethical Product Decisions. Interested volunteers contacted the researcher to arrange an interview time. The interview then occurred at their office and was audio-recorded.

### ***3.8.4 Implementation***

The following discusses where the studies took place and how the research was conducted for the high involvement ethical consumption domain. Study 2 (Phase 1 Exploratory) will first be described, followed by Study 4 (Phase 2 Main).

#### ***3.8.4.1 Observation***

An observation study took place at Reid's Heritage Homes main office during a training workshop on Net Zero Homes where realtors, sales representatives and SEE home developers were present. From this observation, the focus was placed on a few key issues, which aided in the initial understanding of the complexity of the case. Observations occurred over one day and were documented using written and audio-taped notes.

#### ***3.8.4.2 Interviews***

For both Study 2 (Phase 1 Exploratory) and Study 4 (Phase 2 Main), the interview questionnaire was created and the interviews were conducted at a prearranged location. Most occurred at the interviewee's workplaces, but the University of Guelph was also made available as a meeting location if the interviewee preferred that option. The questions asked in the interview can be

found in the appendix. Answers were open-ended and no scales were used. A practice interview took place with a real estate agent prior to commencing Study 2 (Phase 1 Exploratory). That interview took over 80 minutes. This practice interview was used as an initial test of the questions, checking for clarity and relevance. Questions were revised and the exploratory study interviews ran for a shorter time (10.2 minutes – 21.6 minutes).

It was important to provide the procedures sequentially in which the research participants were involved. First, Reid's Heritage Homes (RHH) sent out an invitation to participate in this study to sales representatives and real estate agents. Interested parties contacted the researcher to arrange an interview time. Next, interviews were conducted at a meeting place pre-arranged with the interviewee, usually at their office or an office within their workplace. Prior to the interview, the consent form was emailed to the interviewee for review. Participants were given \$10 gift cards to a popular Canadian coffee shop called Tim Horton's. At the beginning of the interview, the consent form was reviewed with the interviewees.

#### **3.8.4.3 Consent Form**

The consent form was a requirement from the Research Ethics Board (see Appendix). The form provided those that volunteered to participate in the study with general information about the research project: lead investigator, broad purpose of the study, procedures, potential risks and discomforts, potential benefits to participants and/or to society, payment for participation, confidentiality, participation and withdrawal and the rights of research participants. All participants received the consent form prior to volunteering to participate and were also read the consent form at the time of the interviews. A debriefing occurred at the end of the interview ensuring that participants were aware that the study not only focused on home purchase decision-making, but also sustainable and energy efficient decisions. This was to ensure that participants who may have felt embarrassed for not knowing about these aspects, and no longer wanted to participate in the study were given the opportunity to withdraw. Since the research was specifically interested in how much they knew about SEE features, asking questions about their familiarity within the interview was necessary. The only person observing this possible

embarrassment was the interviewer and she stressed that all levels of familiarity with such products is not common. Gift cards were given at the interview session and participants received the gift card no matter what their participation level. The participants also had the option to decline to continue their contribution to the research if they so wished.

#### **3.8.4.4 Procedural Script**

A procedural script was developed and outlined the high-level steps regarding interviewee contact. The following table illustrates the steps adhered to when communicating with participants during the research process.

*Figure 15. Procedural Script High Involvement Ethical Decision Making*

1. Respond to interested volunteers	-Thank those who responded and send a copy of the consent form. -Arrange a meeting place to conduct the interview. -Choose the most convenient location for the participant.
2. Interview process	-Thank those who responded and send a copy of the consent form. -Arrange a meeting place to conduct the interview. -Choose the most convenient location for the participant.
3. Post interview	-Email research findings to participants once the project has been completed.

#### **3.8.5 Data Management and Analysis**

The following discusses how the data was captured, where it was kept and how it was coded and analysed for the high involvement ethical consumption domain. Study 2 (Phase 1 Exploratory) will first be described, followed by Study 4 (Phase 2 Main).

##### **3.8.5.1 Observation**

An unstructured observation allowed the researcher to observe actions and behaviours with limited misunderstanding or misinterpretation. The observation captured realtor and developer interactions, sales presentations of Net Zero houses, and the training workshop atmosphere. An interpretive

account of the observation was recorded and revisited during the analysis stage to compare findings from the other research methods. The information was kept on a computer in a locked office. This observation, along with documentation on the SEE home subcategory and related research literature was used to decide on the methodology. To achieve the goal of identifying factors that impact purchasing behaviour in this high involvement context, a qualitative methodology was employed. A description of the insights gained from the observation can be found in Chapter Four.

### **3.8.5.2 Interviews**

The research design is guided by a general intent to seek an understanding of this phenomenon rather than by testing a specific research hypothesis (Yin, 2009). Given that this research aims to also understand the purchasing process between a realtor or sales representative and a buyer, a relativist approach will underpin the research design. Through the interaction between the researcher and the participants, constructs are obtained and understood (Guba & Lencon 1994, p. 11) with the focus being on the participants (Creswell, 2009, p.8). To understand a social phenomenon, the events and research must be recorded and the events and experiences of those people within it should be analysed. A thematic analysis will accompany this approach as this method identifies, analyses, and reports themes within the findings (Braun & Clark 2006).

Qualitative interviews are considered appropriate to facilitate the exploration of buyer and seller experiences within the SEE home purchasing process (Bonoma, 1985; Ellram, 1996). Interviews are also widely accepted as applied forms of social enquiry (Punch, 2005). This method was chosen for the current research, as it is currently at the exploratory stage and the purpose is to gain insight into the topic of sustainable consumption of a high involvement SEE home purchase.

Drawing from the observation, related documentation and research literature, a set of questions were then written. These questions were first tested in a sample interview with a Guelph realtor. They were then revised before being utilized. Interviews were then conducted with realtors and sales



representatives that sell homes with a variety of features including sustainability and energy efficiency in Kitchener-Waterloo-Cambridge-Guelph (KWCG) area in Southern Ontario, Canada. The research questions were addressed through empirical research designed to further identify themes that constitute barriers to ethical consumption of high involvement SEE Homes. For Study 2 (Phase 1 Exploratory), six realtors were interviewed and questions were semi-structured in nature. For Study 4 (Phase 2 Main) fifteen realtors were interviewed and the questions were open-ended in nature. One of the strengths of using the interview method is the degree of information that can be obtained (Creswell, 2013). The conversation allowed the interviewer to provide clarification when needed and to explore ideas further (in conversation) that normally might not appear with other methods. Study 2 interviews were between 10.2 minutes – 21.6 minutes in length and Study 4 interviews were between 16.0 minutes -30.7 minutes in length, both were electronically recorded. The verbatim transcripts were typed out using a transcribing service and evaluated through a 'funnel' structure that created a progressively focused theme over time (Punch, 2005).

Transcripts were first all read through as a whole. Then notes were made about the researcher's first impressions. Next, the transcripts were read through one by one, carefully line by line. This thematic analysis was conducted using NVivo software. While Nvivo systematically managed textual data, it was then interpreted and compiled into discrete themes which were amplified with examples from the data text. Tools were utilized to gain a sense of trends. The word frequency query helped to identify key words in the text. Recurring themes around the SEE home purchasing process were identified. Words were labelled, as were phrases, sentences, or sections in the transcripts. These labels were about actions or described opinions that were relevant to the ethical decision-making process. They were decided based on the frequency of use. Similarly, labels were also decided based on new or surprising information. Other times, labels were decided because the interviewee explicitly stated something as being important. Information found within the transcriptions that was similar to the reviewed literature (theories or

concepts) were also labelled, as well as any further information that was deemed to be relevant.

Study 2 (Phase 1 Exploratory) approach used preconceived theories and concepts to inform the analysis based on the information provided in the literature findings. Study 4 (Phase 2 Main) used a more open-minded approach to the questions. Coding aimed to develop a conceptualization of underlying patterns. The approach considered structure to be created after the process. The researcher was the interpreter and the phenomena were highlighted because of the importance that was given to the data. In an effort to reduce biases, the researcher stayed close to the data (transcripts) and did not hesitate to code plenty of phenomena.

Categories were created by bringing several codes together. This was made based on the codes that were deemed to be the most important. New codes were created by combining two or more codes that were able to overlap to these larger categories. This process conceptualized the data. Categories were labelled and the ones that were most relevant were kept and decisions were made on how they were connected together. The main results of the study were these categories and the connections. They are the core of the whole study when we look at the results and this new knowledge about the decision-making process from the perspective of the participants in the study. Finally, decisions were made regarding the hierarchy among the categories and decisions about level of importance were made.

### **Research Ethics Board Approval**

Ethics approval was received from the Research and Knowledge Transfer Support (RKTS) Department at the University of Bradford. Research Ethics Board (REB) Approval was also received at the researcher's place of employment, the University of Guelph, prior to commencing data collection. Due to the nature of the study involving humans, the researcher was asked to complete a mandatory course on research ethics titled, The Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans. The certificate of completion can be found in the appendix. Once the course was completed,

the application forms were filled and submitted for approval from the boards. Once approval was met, the steps to conduct the fieldwork/data collection began. Phase 1 took approximately 4 weeks to complete and Phase 2 took approximately 6 weeks to complete.

## **Chapter 4**

### **4.1 Findings**

The purpose of this chapter is to identify the findings from the Phase 1 Exploratory Studies (Study 1 and Study 2) and the Phase 2 Main Studies (Study 3 and Study 4). These findings will be presented within each involvement domain. First, the chapter discusses the quantitative survey and the qualitative findings within the Low Involvement Ethical Consumption Domain (Study 1 and Study 3). The chapter then progresses to present the qualitative findings from the High Involvement Ethical Consumption Domain (Study 2 and Study 4). The key elements and relationships are then distilled into a conceptual model.

### **4.2 Low Involvement Ethical Consumption Findings**

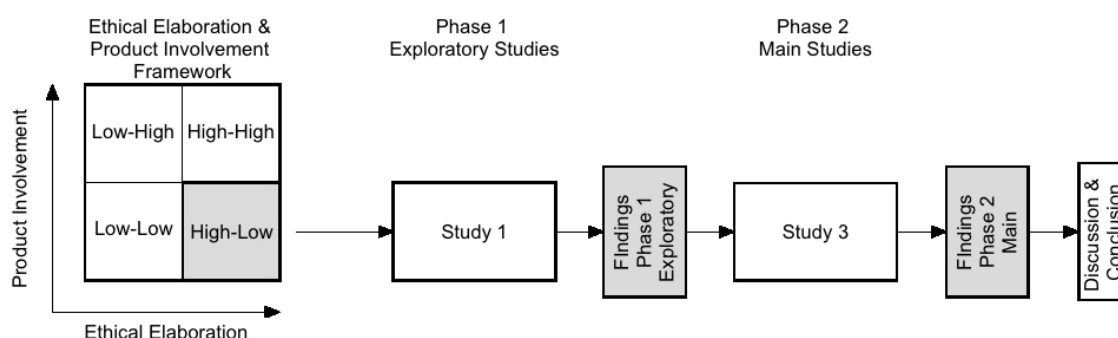
Study 1 and Study 3 explored the factors that influence ethical consumption through the examination of routinized low involvement products with ethical features at farmers' markets. Study 1 tested what was known in the literature. This was achieved at two farmers' markets through a survey, an observation and semi-structured interviews. A total of twelve in-depth interviews with vendors (N=6) and consumers (N=6) were conducted. Initially, the findings from the exploratory qualitative research are discussed and preliminarily interpreted. Questions were developed from the literature and most constructs aligned with literature findings. Through a cross analysis a relationship between household income and specific constructs identified in influencing decision-making were found.

Study 3 further investigated ethical decision-making and addressed the concerns that Study 1 identified. This study was less prescribed and implemented a more open-ended question approach during the interviews. It also addressed demographic concerns by interviewing consumers at a diverse variety of locations. The study took place at six different farmers' markets in Southern Ontario, Canada: the City of Guelph, the City of Hamilton, St. Jacobs Market, Dundas Market, Rockwood Market and Cambridge Market. It was important that this study approached the research through an unbiased lens

and this allowed for new insights into ethical decision-making. The qualitative investigation included a total of twenty-five in-depth interviews with vendors (N=15) and consumers (N=10).

The following figure illustrates the section of the research process that will be discussed. These findings are from both the exploratory and main studies from the Low Involvement Ethical Product Domain.

*Figure 16. Stages of the Research Process –Low Involvement Findings*



The observed themes and survey findings from the Phase 1 Exploratory study will be presented first, followed by the interview themes from both Phase 1 Exploratory and Phase 2 Main findings within the low involvement ethical consumption domain.

#### **4.2.1 Observed Themes**

An unstructured observation of the Guelph and Hamilton Farmers' Markets captured patterns of vendor behaviours, consumer behaviours and buyer-seller interactions. The unstructured observation addressed the gap in ethical decision-making between consumers' attitude and behaviour by observing actual behaviour at the point of purchasing and using this information to create a more holistic understanding of the decision-making experience. The rationale for the observation was to develop additional findings and themes, thereby providing a more holistic understanding of the shopping experience. It attempted to account for the appeal of shopping at the farmers' market and identify driving factors that motivated conscious consumers to shop there. The research was able to elaborate on the findings by asking the following

questions: *Were there similarities among the themes? Were there observations supporting the findings from the consumers and vendors? Would anything interesting be observed when attempting to just document the natural day-to-day occurrences?*

In order to identify themes, observations were first documented through written notes. These notes described in detail the atmosphere, interactions, and behaviours of the people at the Farmers' Market. The methods used to analyse these notes were Coding and Memoing. Coding is the application of labels or descriptors to qualitative data for the purpose of labelling and categorising (Punch, 2005). This was used to start the process and took place throughout the analysis. Memoing is writing up the ideas surrounding the codes and theorising about them (Punch, 2005). Codes and their relationships led to ideas that were theorised in the write-up. Information was then abstracted and compared to other identified concepts and themes. The analysis implemented a 'funnel' structure that created a progressively focused theme over time (Punch, 2005). The following describes the Guelph Farmers' Market and Hamilton Farmers' Market.

The Guelph Farmers' Market is located in the downtown area of the City of Guelph. It had a relaxed atmosphere with older finishings and the interior did not follow any specific theme. The vendor stalls were decorated differently and mismatched tables were used to display their produce. The Hamilton Farmers' Market is a modern building located on a main corner in the downtown core of the city. The inside appeared orderly with each vendor showcasing their produce on identical looking stalls. Marketing billboards and signage that highlighted the historical importance of the market decorated the walls in a unified manner.

## Guelph Farmers' Market



## Hamilton Farmers' Market



Several of the observation findings aided in answering the research questions. When observing behaviour and discussions had by consumers, themes emerged around a trusting atmosphere and social gathering, vendor relationships, positive produce perceptions, fear and health concerns as well as misconceptions at the market. These themes were noted as being very important in shaping behaviour and were identified as driving forces for consumers that shop at the market. Similarities existed with these observed themes and the themes identified by vendors and consumers from the interviews, thus underscoring the importance of conducting an observation when addressing the attitude-behaviour gap in the ethical consumption

domain. In other words, the observation focused more on the actual behaviour and not the attitude/intention that leads to the behaviour.

The main themes that emerged from the observation data will be discussed in the following paragraphs.

A ***trusting atmosphere*** was observed among all interactions between people at the market. The buildings had a very casual and familiar feel, people greeted each other with a smile and the long history of vendor attendance added to the familiar environment. It was apparent from the observation that the market was seen as a place for **Social Gathering** by consumers. There was a central location that was used as a meeting place to for consumers to not only pause and drink coffee or eat treats that they had recently purchased, but also a place for people to greet familiar faces passing by or meet friends to socialise over food. The buyer and seller interactions also demonstrated a level of social connection as people spent time speaking about the products being purchased and although often short, exchanges did occur.

**Vendor Relationships** emerged as a theme as strong vendor and consumer relationships were noted during the observation. Buyers and sellers greeted each other often with brief friendly banter and there appeared to be a high level of trust and satisfaction with vendors among consumers. Soft sell approaches appeared to work best with vendors when selling their products.

A ***positive produce perception*** emerged as people were observed purchasing produce and overheard discussing the types of products that they were interested in as well as the importance of purchasing fresh, local and organic produce. This positive perception towards the produce at the farmers' market was evident.

**Fear and Health Concerns** emerged as a theme as vendors often displayed signs indicating, 'natural', 'healthy', 'chemical free' and even 'homemade'. Consumers were also overheard discussing issues and concerns about 'unnatural' products and the impact they have on their health.



**Misconceptions** emerged regarding product offerings. There were several contradictions around what was ‘truly’ organic in the information presented at the stands and people were observed talking about it and discussing health concerns regarding the products. The terms ‘local’, ‘organic’ and ‘chemical free’ were sometimes used interchangeably. People were observed purchasing products that were organic and also products that were not organic. One vendor posted a sign that stated, “We grow what we sell” and this was observed as an attempt to provide clarity over the confusion regarding locally grown products.

The following images demonstrate the types of signage displayed at the vendor booths in the farmers’ market.



The observation notes and emerging themes as well as finalised themes are located in the appendix.

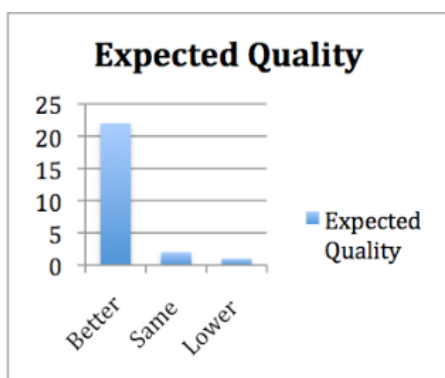
#### **4.2.2 Survey Findings**

A questionnaire was designed for conscious consumers who shop at the farmers’ market. The following identifies driving factors and other relevant findings that motivate consumers to buy produce at the market. The answers

appeared to be reliable as there was consistency among respondents based on the identified demographic. The questionnaire can be found in the appendix as well as the full detailed findings report.

Participants were asked questions on the expectations of price and quality compared to other retail facilities and the overwhelming majority (88%), indicated that they expected the quality of the produce sold at farmers' markets to be better than that at other retail facilities. Only 8% of respondents anticipated the quality to be the same and 4% to be worse. A significant number of participants believed prices to be higher at farmers' markets (44%), just over one third did not expect any difference in price (36%) while only a few anticipated lower prices at farmers' markets than at other facilities (12%).

*Figure 17. Survey Findings:  
Expected Quality*



*Figure 18. Survey Findings:  
Expected Price*



In order to determine which characteristics play an important role when consumers decide to shop for their produce at the farmers' market, survey participants were asked to indicate how they would rate the following factors: available organic produce, available locally grown produce, vendor attitude, prices, hours of operation and location convenience. Participants were asked how they would rate the farmers' market characteristics and were presented a 5 point Likert Scale that ranged from 5= Excellent, 4= Very Good, 3=Good, 2=Fair, and 1=Poor. The results showed an overwhelming number of participants felt that vendor attitude was excellent or very good at the farmers' market (96%). The majority of participants thought that the amount of organic

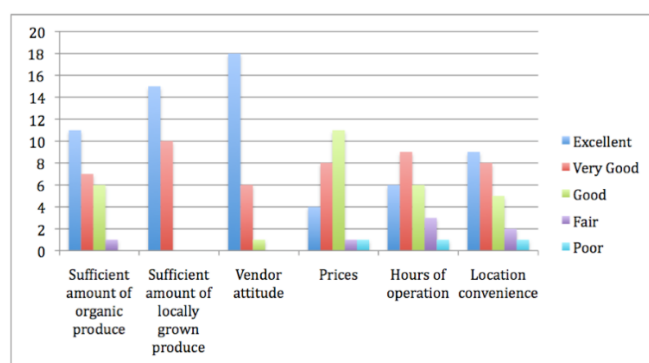
produce was good or better (96%) and locally grown produce was very good or better (100%). Overall, the characteristics all received on average a rating of 'good' or above. however, price, hours of operation and location convenience did receive some lower ratings.

This information is presented in the following table and figure, n=25.

*Table 1. Survey Findings: Driving Factors for Shopping at the Market*

Characteristics	Excellent	Very Good	Good	Fair	Poor
Sufficient amount of organic produce	44%	28%	24%	4%	0%
Sufficient amount of locally grown produce	60%	40%	0%	0%	0%
Vendor attitude	72%	24%	4%	0%	0%
Prices	16%	32%	44%	4%	4%
Hours of operation	24%	36%	24%	12%	4%
Location convenience	36%	32%	25%	8%	4%

*Figure 19. Survey Findings: Driving Factors for Shopping at the Market*

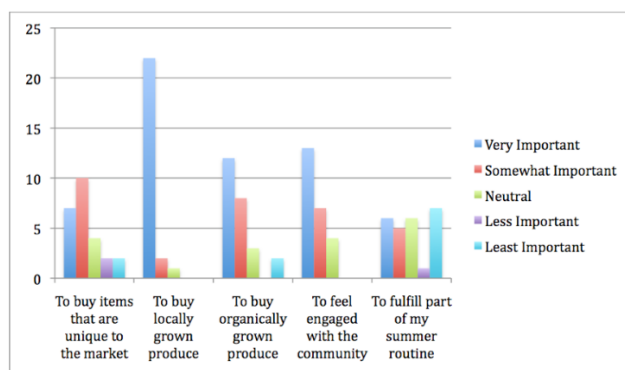


Participants were then asked the reasons why they shop at the farmers' market and were presented a list of options with a 5 point Likert Scale that they could rate them from 5=Very Important, 4=Somewhat Important, 3=Neutral, 2=Less Important, and 1=Least Important. This is represented in the following table and figure, n=25.

*Table 2. Survey Findings: Reasons Consumers Shop at the Farmers' Market*

<b>Reasons for Shopping at the Farmers' Market</b>	<b>Very Important</b>	<b>Somewhat Important</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Less Important</b>	<b>Least Important</b>
To buy items that are unique to the market	28%	40%	16%	8%	8%
To buy locally grown produce	88%	8%	4%	0%	0%
To buy organically grown produce	48%	32%	12%	0%	8%
To feel engaged with the community	52%	28%	16%	4%	0%
To fulfil part of my summer routine	24%	20%	24%	4%	28%
Other (please specify)	28%	0%	0%	0%	0%

*Figure 20. Survey Findings: Why Consumers Shop at the Farmers' Market*



Reasons listed under “other” were the following:

- “Social aspect”
- “Meet my wonderful market friends!”
- “It’s tradition!”
- “To meet my friends and family.”
- “To fulfil my yearly routine.”
- “Atmosphere”
- “I feel safe knowing where my food is coming from.”
- “To buy food that tastes WAY better than the grocery store

#### **4.2.2.1 Organic and Locally Grown Produce Consumption Choice**

Consumers were then asked how often they chose organic produce for consumption. Results indicate that consumers choose both local and organic produce for consumption. Both were very similar with organic always or usually chosen 80% of the time and local produce always or usually being chosen 76% of the time.

Figure 21. Survey Findings: Organic Produce Choice Influence

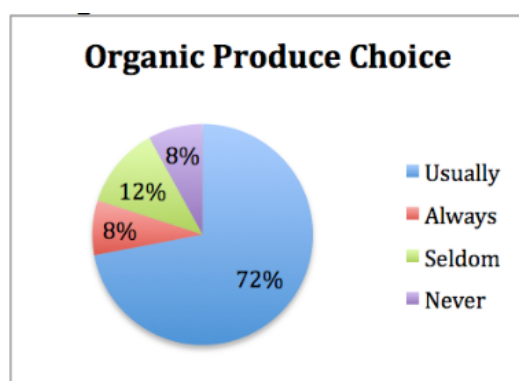
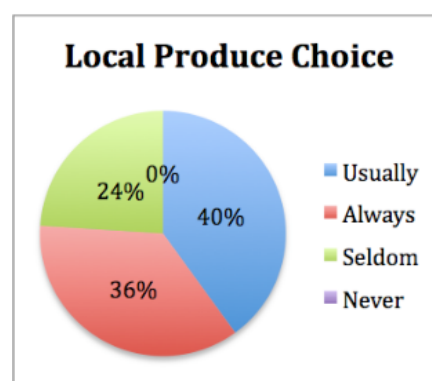


Figure 22. Survey Findings: Local Produce Choice Influence



Of the survey participants, a significant number stated that the availability of locally grown produce affects where they do most of their food shopping (80%). This finding demonstrated that the consumers at the farmers' market are 'conscious consumers' which aligned closely with the literature (Szmigin et al., 2009).

#### 4.2.2.2 Where Consumers Purchase Produce

According to the results, all or most of the participants' produce was purchased at farmers' markets (76%) or at supermarkets (36%). The remaining produce purchased came from their own garden (12%), or community veggie box (8%). The following table shows where consumers purchase produce, n=25.

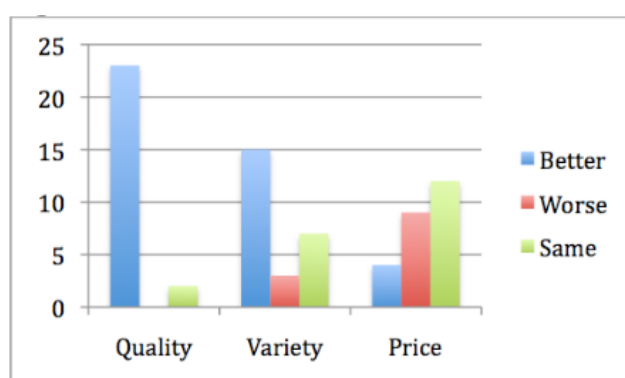
Table 3. Survey Findings: Where Consumers Purchase Produce

Type of Facility	All	Most	Some	None
Farmers' markets	4%	68	24%	0%
Pick your own	0%	0%	20%	80%
Roadside stands	0%	0%	60%	40%
Supermarkets	0%	36%	44%	20%
Friend's garden	0%	0%	44%	56%
Community veggie box	0%	8%	4%	88%
Own garden	0%	12%	44%	44%

#### **4.2.2.3 Perceived Value of Produce Purchasing Location**

Participants were also asked to rate their produce expectation at the farmers' market in terms of quality, variety and prices compared to other retail facilities. All participants expected quality to be the same or better at the farmers' market. Similarly, the expected variety mostly was the same or better than other retail facilities (88%). Price was expected to be the same or more expensive (84%).

*Figure 23. Survey Findings: Perceived Value of Produce Purchasing Location*



#### **4.2.2.4 How Consumers Feel About Farmers' Markets**

In one section of the questionnaire, survey participants were asked to provide their opinions with respect to three different statements related to farmers' markets' main objectives. The findings from this question determined that freshness and direct contact with farmers were the main factors that drive people to farmers' markets.

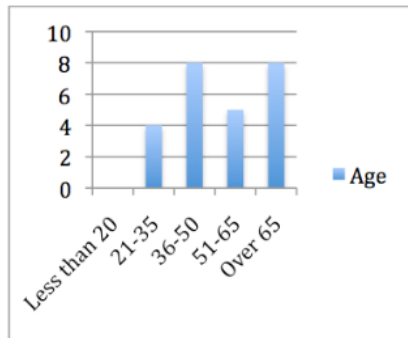
#### **4.2.2.5 Demographic Results**

Section 2 of the survey was designed to collect information on demographic and descriptive characteristics of the participants. Knowing the profile of participants was helpful when interpreting the data.

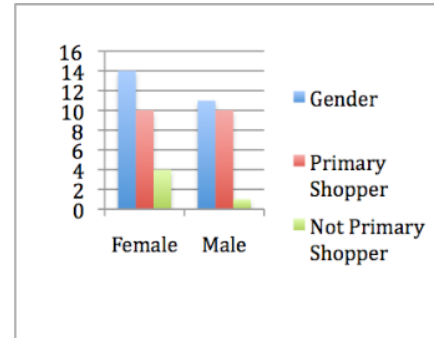
The majority of respondents were either between the ages of 36-50 or over 65 years of age. None of the participants fell under the age of 20. With regard to gender, 14 identified themselves as female and 11 as male. The majority of participants, 80%, identified themselves as being the primary shopper of food

in their household and 20% identified themselves as not being the primary shopper.

*Figure 24. Survey Findings: Participant Age*

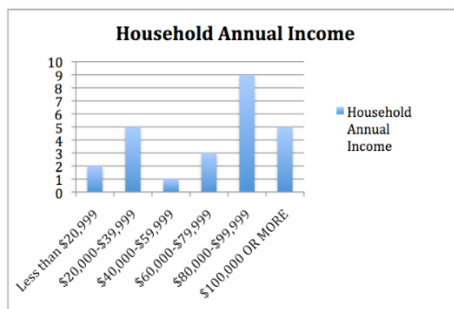


*Figure 25. Survey Findings: Gender & Shopping Role*



The results indicated that 56% of participants had an annual household income of over \$80,000. This is broken down further with 8% of the respondents earning less than \$20,999. The household income of 20% was between \$20,000-\$39,999, 4% between \$40,000-\$59,000 and 12% between \$60,000-\$79,999. Households with annual income of \$80,000-\$99,999 made up the largest representative income group (36%). Respondents earning more than \$100,000 represented the remaining 20% of respondents.

*Figure 26. Survey Findings: Annual Household Income*



#### **4.2.2.6 Household Income Impact on Decision-making**

A new finding was discovered when cross analysing household income with the reasons given by consumers for why they shop at the farmers' market. Those who belonged to a lower household income, (less than \$39,999) identified tradition and safety/security as reasons for shopping at the market. All findings supported those identified within the literature, except for this cross



analysis finding with the lower household income demographic. These findings were not common in the literature. In fact, tradition and security has been found in the literature to be associated with less ethical or less sustainable consumption patterns (Vermeir & Verbeke, 2006).

#### **4.2.3 Interview Themes**

Consumers who shopped at the farmers' markets and vendors who sold their produce at the farmers' markets were interviewed for both Phase 1 Exploratory Study 1 (N=12) and Phase 2 Main Study 3 (N=25). An inductive interview technique was implemented and semi-structured and in-depth questions were asked. The list of questions can be found in the Appendix. A thematic analysis was used throughout this process to analyse the interviews. Once coding occurred, connections were made between the themes and categories.

Several of the findings aided in answering the research questions. It was discovered that not only behavioural influencing factors were identified, but also barriers that prevent consumers from purchasing ethical products. Themes that prevent behaviour appeared the most often within the findings, these were grouped together as Barriers. Themes that influence behaviour at the farmers' market were also identified and grouped together. These included, trust, information, ethical motivation and signalling. Relationships between the themes that influence behaviour were identified and recorded. Similarly, relationships between the themes that prevent behaviour and themes that influence behaviour were identified and recorded. Similarities were found among the influential factors identified by vendors to those identified by consumers. The following will present these barriers and the themes that emerged from the data and their corresponding relationships.

##### **4.2.3.1 Low Involvement Barriers**

Several barriers emerged within the data and they formed an overarching category. Barriers consisted of all identified findings that contributed to the attitude-behaviour gap.



#### 4.2.3.1.1 Lack of Convenience Barrier

The most significant barrier was identified as convenience. This was broken down further into shopping location convenience which fit with daily routines, and product offering convenience which focused on the one stop shopping that larger grocery chains allowed. Consumers looking to do all of their shopping in one location were not always able to do so due to the fact that the markets are often only open once or twice a week and there existed a lack of variety regarding food options. Major grocery chains were more convenient due to their operating hours (often open until 10:00 p.m. and some 24 hours/day). Similarly, larger grocery stores offered convenient product variety allowing consumers to purchase all their product needs at one location. The following quotes describe these convenience barriers.

*“I think there are a good portion of people that want to show up at farmers’ markets, maybe have the best intention of shopping farmers’ markets but don’t, just based on most of our lifestyles. You want to stop and kind of get everything you need rather than stopping twice. Or stop, get everything you need and not be disappointed that, “Uh, they don’t have that or they don’t have this,” you know? ...Convenience and familiarity, whereas there’s a sticking point now with farmers’ markets too, I think, where there’s almost too many farmers’ markets or, at the same time, not enough farmers’ markets. Because if there’s a farmers’ market on every single neighbourhood corner, well then you could stop in anytime you wanted to; but when there’s too many smaller markets that maybe don’t have everything, they’re always lacking something so they’re never going to get all those people.” (Vendor 9).*

*“I think there’s a habit today in consumption that people buy for a day or two; that’s about it. They don’t buy for a week time. So being this market is only once a week, it might be part of the reason. I know Europe many markets are open all week long, so every day they go and get their little beans for the day and... So I think this habit of buying for once a week is perhaps of the past. And the*

*younger generation, they stop every day a little bit at the grocery store; but for me it would be very difficult if this thing would be open every day...In the grocery store you can buy anything all year round. Here, the farmers' market, those that are farmers sell only what's in season, you know? I don't have asparagus right now because asparagus is over with, where in the grocery store, they get it from India or from China, or they don't care. They have to have everything all the time; so this is a difference.” (Vendor 13).*

The convenient consumer lifestyle that includes a limited number of shopping trips with the aim of purchasing food items to last the week, is seen as a barrier as farmers' markets are not open throughout the week at convenient hours. They also offer a limited number of product offerings as several items are not made in Canada or are seasonal and not often available at the farmers' market during the winter months.

#### **4.2.3.2 Trust and Misconceptions**

Misconceptions emerged as a category due to the ambiguous information regarding the ethical features of products (e.g., local, organic, pesticide free, etcetera). Misconceptions act as a barrier that creates cognitive dissonance for consumers. This is demonstrated through concerns expressed about the potential negative impact products have on consumers health and the lack of evidence that products are actually what they claim to be within the produce consumption market. This aligns with the existing literature that has demonstrated that food fraud has become a source of concern for consumers in Canada (Charlebois et al., 2017). Trust in the buyer seller relationship reduces this dissonance. Consumers recognised that misconceptions exist and also expressed a trust in the vendor relationship that lessened misconceptions as they described the ethical features of the produce that they were purchasing.

*“It probably is organic but it's not labeled organic” (Participant 3).*

*“And we trust that our farmers use the proper - if they do use any sprays or whatnot it's responsible and to make sure that it's product that are well grown.” (Participant 1).*

*“And I go here because I can get almost everything I need and have really human interactions with people... I don't exactly know how everything is sourced, but I sort of have a little bit more trust here. I haven't, like, dug into how everything is sourced. But I - I guess I just sort of assume it's better than factory farms. Yeah...I haven't sourced all the stuff here, but I sort of assume it's more often organic, non-GMO, and I guess I like those things.” (Participant 9).*

The above statements clearly demonstrate that when information is missing within the labels, consumers at the farmers' market assume that ethical features still exist within the produce. Trust mitigates the perceived risk due to the lack of information for consumers as they trust that the vendors/farmers have grown their food in an ethical way. They acknowledge the cognitive dissonance that exists due to the awareness of the negative external costs to production (environment, animal well-being, child labour etcetera) that their purchasing decisions have. Consumers demonstrated that although misconceptions exist, they felt reassured about the produce based on their trust in the vendor. The relationship with the farmer reduces the dissonance as consumers trust that these external costs are reduced based on good intentions.

*“I like to know where my food's coming from. - they are local and I - you can go to the farm and I know how they treat the animals and partly because they make really good product. I like getting the meat there more than the big box stores because they have their own farm and I know where the meat is coming from again, and it's good quality meat and everything...So not as much corn based diet, that I can do the grass fed. So it's not as ... I don't know, like interfered with, I guess, the natural process of things. And I mean*

*you - it's hormone and anti-biotic free as well whether that has an aspect on health or not I don't know but it's always nice the fewer additives and everything within your foods...One is the kind of the personal side of things that you can actually talk to the vendors more and get more background information as to where it's coming from...you do get to know the person and can kind of judge whether you trust their practices or not...so for certain things getting to know the vendors and picking and choosing which ones I shop at, I like that side of things, that I can trust - well my judgement basically in how they're growing things and that it is local.” (Participant 10).*

The above statement demonstrates the relationship between knowledge, trust, and misconceptions. Vendor knowledge is important as it not only educates the consumer about the products they are purchasing, but also aids in forming a trusting judgment of the vendor and this trust seems to have a halo effect on consumers' overall evaluation of the produce. Knowing the farmers, builds a sense of trust that although these misconceptions exist, there is a sense that they are ethically enhanced in some way. There is an awareness that it is not always 100% what it claims to be (organic, local, pesticide free) but rather they are 'better' and more likely to have more ethical features due to this trust. The trust reduces consumer dissonance regarding the consumption of products that have unsatisfactory costs to productions associated with them. The following quote from one vendor mentions that they used to refer to their produce as organic, but stopped due to regulations. However, they then describe their effort to have ethical features as something they 'try' to do but is difficult depending on the time of year. Building trust with the consumers is described again as a way to share knowledge that mitigates the consumer dissonance.

*“We looked at certifying ourselves as organic a couple of years ago, and it was just a big can of worms that we just didn't want to get involved in. Dad and I both decided that it's better if the customer just keeps asking questions, and then people really know what they're eating. So we used to use the word “organic” on*

*everything. And seeing that now we're not certified, we're not supposed to use anymore; but people generally know and trust us to do the best we can. We try to source all non-GMO feeds. During different times of the year it's difficult; but those who don't know, ask. And then I tell them the same thing I'm telling you. They seem to understand and respect our decision. Some people walk away, and we have to respect that as well...I think there's a huge lack of trust among the consumer these days. Well, just yesterday the University of Guelph found in the sausages meat that it's not supposed to be in what it was labelled...So with stories like that and others very similar, I don't think the customers are trusting what they're finding in the stores. So the ability to talk to the people who actually made the food or grew the food, it's a shorter chain from the producer to the consumer; less opportunity for things to go wrong in a shorter chain." (Vendor 11).*

Vendors also acknowledge misconceptions in ethical features with the food that they sell at the farmers' market. They are not always able to provide items that are locally grown and chemical free. This came out in the interviews as vendors discussed their products and their perceptions of other farmer's products at the market.

*"Yes, we do sell local. We sell all Ontario. We go down to – we actually go down to Toronto and we meet some of the farmers down there because you have farmers that go to Toronto. Some of them come a few hours away with their product; and you're able to look at the product, see the product, and then determine, "Okay, yeah. I'd like to sell this product." (Vendor 12).*

*"When I was growing up, the farmer was the one selling the produce and you knew everything about it. And now it's somebody going to a food terminal and buying. And it's not that it's bad or wrong or anything; it's just different." (Vendor 10).*

The above statements are examples of vendors' acknowledging that not all food at the farmers' market is local and that sometimes food comes from the food terminal brought in from around the province and other countries to the City of Toronto. The Canadian market is sensitive to macro-economic conditions due to its northern climate and short growing period. This has impacted the produce offered to consumers throughout the country (Charlebois et al., 2017). The findings from the current study supported the literature and the price volatility has led to the misconceptions of both the consumers and vendors at the market.

*"Perceived freshness and perceive that they're getting from the farmer. Because a lot of people aren't farmers that come to farmers' markets anymore. They're not people who – what I call "job." So they're getting from a farmer, or from a terminal, and they're just selling. They go to the farmer or wherever and they buy and they sell because it gets hard for the farmer to grow and sell; but people think they are. And depending on the person that's selling it, whether they project that they are or not. Farmers' markets have changed so much in the past few years that they're not really farmers' market. They're flea markets; and people are getting mislead by that... you have one job or grower, whatever, who sets up several little booths with different people behind them to pretend to be farmers, right, as compared to an actual farmer."*  
(Vendor 13)

The above quote demonstrates the misconceptions that exist due to consumers expectations from the market atmosphere and the authenticity of vendors' 'farmers' background. Vendors also noted these misconceptions when discussing other vendors at the market. They described the practices as misleading as other vendors at the farmer's market were claiming to sell products as being from their farm, but stated this was not possible as they did not own the equipment to supply these claims. The following quote is an example of statements that demonstrates this.

*"We don't have organic products here, but we have wholesome products. Some of the products here, some farmers will claim that they're strictly organic. Me – well, my husband and I, as farmers – if we look at a product and they're claiming strictly organic, the first thing that goes through my mind is, "Why isn't there a blemish on the merchandise? Because when you're organic, you're not using pesticides, so very difficult claim. Unless they've got a ton of ladybugs out there, you know, that are getting rid of some of the insects that are going into the product, which would be an interesting question to ask the farmer that is organic, and – yeah, I guess that would be about it. You can have a vendor in here or anywhere, and they can say, "Everything I do is mine. I have a big..." Oftentimes, the bigger the farm, the bigger the claim, in the end they have to supplement. So sometimes you might find that you're going into a – you're selling to a big vendor, and they're repackaging. So that – Yeah. It doesn't necessarily mean that the product isn't as great as there. It probably is as good as there. However, supplying demand is impossible to keep up to, so then they look to resource their product. If you have chickens – you could have a farm, and they're saying, "I have – I do my own eggs. I have this chicken, I have that chicken." And then people are going there and they're thinking, "Uh, I'm buying chicken from you or beef from you and it's your own," but you have to have a setup where you have to have a station for your eggs and your chicken breasts and whatnot. So some of the product is – you might be allocated farm, but some of the stuff you're doing is resale. Yeah." (Vendor 12).*

To conclude, misconceptions were a significant category that resulted in cognitive dissonance among consumers. Increased knowledge about the produce as well as heightened trust in the vendor reduced the consumer dissonance and were necessary due to the misconceptions that existed within this domain.

#### **4.2.3.3 Information**

Vendors identified the importance of information in closing the convenience gap. Information was seen as vital in changing consumers' perceptions about their shopping routines as well as their expectations regarding produce offerings. The following quotes describe how vendors discussed the use of information to reduce this gap. By providing information about the produce, vendors were able to ensure their products were purchased.

*"They're not as ready to use generally. A lot of people now will go to the grocery store and they'll buy a bag of already chopped up salad so they don't have to deal with that. They assume 'cause it was in a bag or box that it's ready to go, take it out, their portion and they're ready to go...from a farmer's market if it's a head of lettuce, you've got to cut the end off, you've got to wash it, you've got to chop it and in 2017 that seems to be a big deal for a lot of people. I'm being a little sarcastic. At the farmer's market you'll see a lot more not so mainstream produce. Like you see the mainstream, you see the lettuces and the spinach and all those things. But for example today I've got three kinds of beans. And people say well, they're green and yellow. And I say well no, they're actually quite different, try one. And most people wouldn't even do that, wouldn't try it. And actually it was interesting, yesterday at the CSA pick up I was out working and they were picking up on their own and these new beans to me, which are fabulous, I had them in three different bins and those ones didn't go to any CSA customers. I wasn't there to tell them about them. I thought that was an interesting case in point." (Vendor 7).*

Information regarding the lack of pesticides used on products was viewed as important in closing the gap when there are misconceptions regarding the use of chemicals. The consumers' concern regarding ethical features (chemicals used in the environment) related mostly to a concern towards their personal health. Providing information to the consumer to reduce this concern was seen an important way in reducing this barrier to consumption. The following



quote describes how vendors discussed the use of information to reduce this concern.

*“Consumers want to be educated and educating them rather than deceiving them as better...I know what I like, so I you just try and pass it on to... And sometimes I take for granted that people know everything I know, and they don't, so... So I want somebody to come and say, “You’ve taught me something... and I always think learning is a good thing...Yeah, the ‘No Chemicals’ sign, that’s a throwback to my grandma. She used to write that on everything, all the vegetables and fruits they sold because she wasn’t the best at English, so that was her way getting across that there’s nothing fancy. It’s just a vegetable.” (Vendor 11).*

The concern to ensure that consumers are informed about what they are eating has existed for years by vendors. The interaction between vendors and consumers is good relationship building and also an opportunity to educate and shape attitudes towards shopping at the market.

#### **4.2.3.4 Ethical Motivation**

Consumers and vendors commented on the motivation drivers for ethical consumption. When considering the ethical factors, the most common theme related these factors to consumers’ health. Other ethical motivations did exist, however health was the most prevalent. In other words, there existed more of an inner-directed concern for one's health as opposed to an outer directed concern for the environment.

*“Maybe not as much for the environment, but when it comes to health I trust the meats at the farmers’ market a lot more than at other food selling them because I know that there have been some problems with meats in the past and I think that's one thing I definitely try to buy at the farmers’ market...mainly because of the local produce and I feel better about myself. I feel better myself eating food that's locally raised and not - I think that it's a bit*

*healthier to a certain extent because there's less chemicals that are used in it.” (Participant 7).*

*“We're concerned about the amount of poisons going in. Part of it is as I mentioned to you off the recording about our son and his cancer recovery. That's what convinced us to switch to organic. We were running out a conventional farm until then and we stopped as soon as he was diagnosed. I think we're, generalizing, I think we're damaging the environment terribly and unless things change consciously in the world, especially some of the larger dominating countries, we're not going to live much longer. I think we're just poisoning ourselves.” (Vendor 7).*

The above quotes demonstrate this inner directed ethical motivation at the farmers' market. Health concerns were lessened by trust in the vendor relationship as well as through an understanding of how the products were made. This 'local relationship' reduced health concerns. The more familiar and local, the more the products were perceived as being healthy.

*“I think now what a lot of people are saying is as long as they know something is relatively naturally procured or naturally grown or naturally made, local is almost becoming the new organic. They'd rather see the person making it, understand the process. And maybe it's not organic, but maybe that doesn't make a difference to the person or to the difference in quality of product either sometimes... I think it's a cool concept; and I think actually a lot of it is pretty applicable to nowadays. Not just with the farmers' market aspect, but just in general because I think a lot of people from like my generation in particular, my friends and I are making a lot different decisions than previous generations. And maybe people are different ages now as it relates to housing, food, everything.” – Vendor 9*

A new attribute was found to bridge this barrier between, health concerns and local vendor relationships. This was that products were 'homemade', which builds a sense of trust that although the products may not be organic, the familiarity and comfort gained from understanding how the food is made reduced health concerns. The following quote elaborates on this attribute.

*"I assume mainly because they look for local good food, ethically tested. And most importantly because it's kind of attached to what we call it homemade, so it's like small scale, apart from being organic, not treated with chemical. It's just a matter of when you say "homemade." So it is like a small business. So it is not Walmart. It's not a big factory and so on. And it is more – I do believe because I'm also a consumer. I believe because when it is a small scale they feel that there's some type of love and kindness involved in that product because it is something means to the vendor in order to be able to sell it to the customer and get that customer back; if not every week, whenever that customers says, "Uh, I want to buy that. I know where." (Vendor 14).*

Health concerns were described by vendors and consumers as being the greatest motivational driver for ethical consumption. Consumers were inner directed when exploring ethical motivation and relationships with vendors and knowledge about how their food was made, improved their perception of 'healthiness' within the product.

#### **4.2.3.5 Signalling**

Signalling was found within the low involvement ethical consumption domain. Consumers were proud to share that they shopped at the farmers' market. This motivation was to signal happiness and lifestyle to others.

*"And it's also just when you ask what somebody's doing on the weekend, it's, oh, I'm going to go to the farmers' market on Saturday morning. It's just kind of an activity of my life, I guess." (Participant 4).*

*“Definitely, it's a destination. It's not we're going shopping; it's we're going to the farmer's market. It's a difference in attitude, whereas you can go and you can sit and you can browse. You know, you go into a big grocery store and it's kind of like you go in, you get what you want and you get out as fast as you can. You don't have that opportunity to sit and browse and enjoy the sunshine and turn it into an event or a day out.” (Vendor 1).*

*“I want people to know about the fresh produce, social interaction. And at this market in particular, it's part of people's culture. It's a very social market, very neighbourly. There's a lot of relationship building here. Once you're in, you're in. You know, we've been doing this for almost 30 years here, and you know it's basically a generation and a half, and we've seen kids grow up and become parents and bring their kids. “This is our apple guy. We got to get our cider here. We got to get our corn here,” whatever. It's very dedicated. You know, it's cool. It can be your strength and also your weakness, but so far it's a strength.” (Vendor 15).*

*The above quotes demonstrate the signalling that occurs at the farmers' market. Sharing a lifestyle of community engagement, of supporting local vendors, and a relaxed connected day with others were important to consumers. They were happy about their shopping experience and were enthusiastic about sharing this with others.*

#### **4.2.4 Conclusion**

The findings in the low involvement ethical consumption domain present relationships among driving factors that were identified by vendors and consumers at the farmers' market. These driving factors were trust, information, ethical motivation and signalling. Barriers that prevent consumers from purchasing ethical products were also identified as convenience and misconceptions. The relationships among the driving factors and the barriers were discussed. Convenience was broken down further into location availability and product offering conveniences. Misconceptions due to ambiguous information regarding the ethical features of products (e.g., local,

organic, pesticide free, etcetera) and how they create a dissonance for consumers were also discussed. Trust mitigates the perceived risk from the misconceptions as they trust that the vendors/farmers grow their food in a more ethical way. Knowledge was seen as vital in changing consumers' perceptions about their shopping routines as well as their expectations regarding produce offerings and also created a heightened trust in the vendor which reduced the consumer dissonance. Consumers were mostly concerned about the impact produce had on their health (inner-directed) when exploring ethical motivation. Signalling emerged as a category and focused on signalling a lifestyle to others. Several of the findings aided in answering the research questions and this will be discussed in Chapter 5.

### **4.3 High Involvement Ethical Consumption Findings**

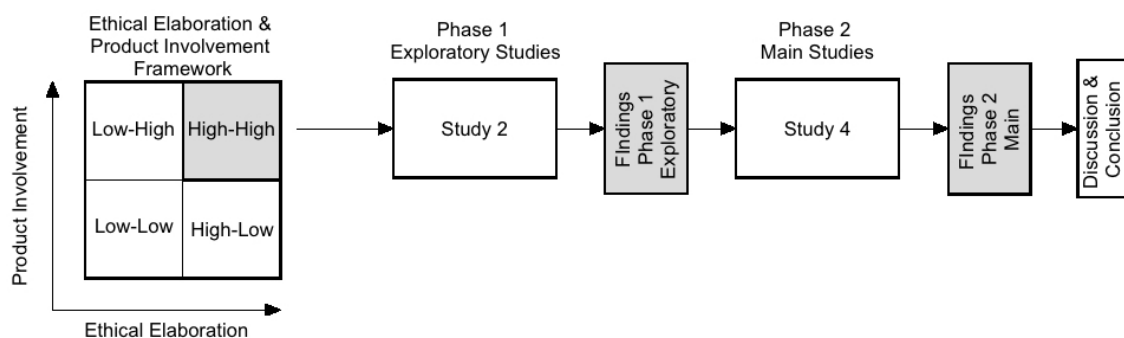
Study 2 and Study 4 explored the factors that influence ethical consumption through the examination of a high involvement product, a home with sustainable and energy efficient features. Interviews took place at building development showrooms and real estate offices in the City of Guelph, Kitchener, and Fergus in southern Ontario, Canada. These studies were important as they provided new insights into the high involvement decision-making domain. Study 2 consisted of twelve semi-structured interviews with consumers (N=6) and realtors (N=6) in the SEE housing market. The questions asked more poignant questions that stemmed from the literature as well as from Study 1 findings.

Study 4 further investigated ethical decision-making and addressed the insights that Study 2 identified. Specifically, how ethical decision-making was experienced as well as the factors that influenced ethical consumption of houses with sustainable or energy efficient features. This study was less prescribed and implemented a more open-ended question approach. It was important that this study approached the research through an unbiased lens as this allowed for new insights into the ethical decision-making high involvement domain. The qualitative investigation included a total of twenty-five in-depth interviews with realtors (N=15) and consumers (N=10). The

results were written up and the categories described where and how the themes were connected.

The following figure illustrates the section of the research process that will be discussed. These findings are from both the exploratory and main studies from the High Involvement Ethical Product Domain.

*Figure 27. Stages of the Research Process –High Involvement Findings*



The observations from the Phase 1 Exploratory study will be presented first, followed by the interview themes from both Phase 1 Exploratory and Phase 2 Main findings within the high involvement ethical consumption domain.

#### **4.3.1 Observations**

An observation took place at the Reid's Heritage Homes main office during a training workshop on Net Zero Homes where realtors, sales representatives and developers were present. The rationale for the observation was to gain insight into the sustainable and energy efficient (SEE) housing market, stakeholder relationships, and to inform the research questions. The observation was documented through written notes and captured realtor and developer interactions, the sales presentation of Net Zero houses, and the training workshop atmosphere. The following provides a description of these new insights. Four sales representatives of the builder, Reid's Heritage Homes, were present as were eight realtors representing real estate brokerages within the Kitchener-Waterloo-Cambridge-Guelph (KWCG) area in

Southern Ontario, Canada. Coffee and breakfast pastries were available in the morning as people congregated and networked with each-other. The format was very professional and the presentation commenced with formal Power-Point slides presenting the various topics to the audience. The presentation was delivered by an executive director of the builder, Reid's Heritage Homes. The first topic presented to the audience promoted their five new Net Zero housing builds. The presenter expressed enthusiasm while he described the background of these new builds and the features within them. After this information was presented (during the first 45 minutes of the presentation) the remaining day focused on SEE building features and discussions occurred around sales techniques as well as growth and development plans for the future. The marketing material and overall messages for how to position these SEE features within the Net Zero Homes to consumers were presented as, 'value proposition messaging' and stressed the following benefits: Healthy Environment, Comfort, Quality Built, Advanced Technology, Ultra-Efficient, and Durability (Reid's Heritage Homes, 2017). These benefits were described in detail with the information presented demonstrating why they were chosen to be included within the value proposition messaging. For example, healthy environment was described as an attribute that could be measured in Net Zero Homes through a comprehensive package that would provide measures to minimise dangerous pollutants and provide continuous fresh and filtered air. Comfort was chosen because the home provided superior insulation, windows, air sealing and a space conditioning system, resulting in comfortable temperatures, low-humidity and quiet rooms on every floor. Quality built was chosen due to advanced construction practices and the technology that would be enforced by independent verifiers. Advanced technology was chosen due to the solid building science and advanced technologies and practices specified by the Net Zero Housing Council and other world class research programs. Ultra-efficient was presented in comparison to a 'typical' home. This feature was described as being inexpensive and would potentially offset most, or all, of the owners' annual energy consumption. Finally, durability was described as standing the test of time and the advanced levels of energy savings, comfort, health, durability, quality and future performances would meet and exceed forthcoming code requirements. The presenter summarised

these benefits as, “Lives Better, Works Better and Lasts Better” (Reid’s Heritage Homes, 2017). The presentation was delivered in a clear concise manner and the audience took notes as they listened. Sandwiches, a vegetable platter and desserts were served at lunch time along with refreshments. The atmosphere was professional, however it was noted that the comments and questions directed from the audience were mostly asked by sales representatives and not realtors. The sales representatives appeared more comfortable discussing the topics, whereas the realtors appeared less familiar and were learning about these new builds and sustainable and energy efficient housing feature options for the first time. There appeared to be a lack of knowledge and awareness that existed within the realtor community regarding SEE housing features. This lack of awareness was noted as those present mentioned that they were surprised to see that most of the realtors invited did not attend the workshop. This observation aided in the initial understanding of the complexity of the topic and in shaping the research questions.

A description of the themes that emerged from the data when examining high involvement ethical decision-making will now be discussed.

#### **4.3.2 Interview Themes**

Consumers who have purchased at least one home and realtor and sales representatives of houses were interviewed for both Phase 1 Exploratory Study 2 (N=12) and Phase 2 Main Study 4 (N=25). An inductive interview technique was implemented. Semi-structured and in-depth questions were asked. The list of questions can be found in the Appendix. A thematic analysis was used throughout this process to analyse the interviews. Once coding occurred, connections were made between the themes and categories.

Several of the findings aided in answering the research questions. Factors that influence SEE housing consumption were identified. These included, trust, information, ethical motivation and signalling. Similarities among the driving factors identified by realtors and those identified by consumers were found. When exploring the research questions, it was discovered that not only



behavioural influencing factors were identified, but also barriers that prevent consumers from purchasing ethical products were identified. Relationships between the themes that influence behaviour were identified and recorded. Similarly, relationships between the themes that prevent behaviour and themes that influence behaviour were identified and recorded. These barriers and the themes that emerged from the data and their corresponding relationships will be discussed in the following paragraphs.

#### **4.3.2.1 High Involvement Barriers**

Barriers consisted of findings that contributed to the attitude-behaviour gap within the sustainable and energy efficient housing category. Barriers within this high involvement domain mostly related to financial risk regarding pricing and investment return uncertainties. Misconceptions also existed with the perceived performance of the sustainable and energy efficient features. This emerged within the data and formed an overarching category.

##### **4.3.2.1.1 Price Barrier**

Price was found to be the most important barrier to purchasing features/attributes and upgrades to a house. Home buyers are willing to pay a premium for a home that is offset by the long-term savings associated with the SEE home (Sadler, 2003; Kwak et al., 2010; Banfi et al., 2008; Dinan & Miranowski, 1989). However, there is little work on SEE adoption in real estate, especially examining residential adoption rates. These findings provide insight into the attitudes towards the price construct and the impact it has on the decision-making process. Price can refer to the overall cost of the home and/or to the features/attributes within the home. When examining the sustainable and energy efficient housing market, the price barrier was the most common theme that emerged from the data.

*“So, I think the challenge is energy efficient homes...they're expensive to build, because they cost more money to build. So, how do you rationalize if somebody is not sold on...like, if it's not about that for them, right, how do you...you know, if it's not about saving the world, right...it's about them...if they're all about*

*themselves, how do you make it so that they are willing to fork over the extra money it costs to build these homes? So, I think that the selling tool would be to have a home similar size, similar everything and the cost per year to run it...versus the cost per year to run this one.... Right. And, the quantitative amount of what it is. You know, like how many dollars per year, is it going to save me? (Participant 8).*

*"It's not even thought of [SEE features] and it's very much needed. I think that other resale homes should be audited. Energy audits should be mandatory when listing a home so that people, the consumer, be educated and not just take a guess when they get their first bill." (Realtor 5).*

Quantifiable information that demonstrates the return of SEE investments were viewed as important in closing this misconception gap. Quantifiable information is viewed as a useful tool for side by side comparisons when pricing misconceptions exist. As a note of clarification, in Ontario, Canada, the word 'hydro' is used synonymously with electricity.

*"Certainly, mentioning to the buyers about the benefits of the actual feature you have, looking at solar panels, depending on the contract you have with hydro, where you're selling back the hydro that you make to lower your payments and then having those figures and costs documented to show them the huge plus, so people can actually see, yeah, this home has solar panels and has had them for three or four years and every year they're running at a deficit. And, I see this quite often actually where the amount of energy they're spending or using in hydro, they're paying for it. That's how it works. And, then the amount of money...or the amount of hydro that they're getting from the sun, through the hydro panels, they're selling back to the government, the hydro company and that usually should give them a negative. That meaning, they're actually getting more money back then they're actually spending in their own hydro. And, once you see those numbers,*

*then obviously it's easier for the buyer to say, yeah, this is a pretty good thing.” (Realtor 9).*

*“Sorry to be a broken record, but for the average person, it all comes down to, you know, price and as long as you can show them that, you know, yeah, the house might be a little bit more money, but this is how much money you're going to save over a 10 or 20-year period, then you might get them to go for it.” (Realtor 14).*

The above quotes demonstrate that financial risk and investment return barriers exist due to misconceptions within this domain. Price was found to be the most significant force when selling a home and this included SEE features. This was common throughout the interviews and was considered to be the number one factor that consumers took into consideration when purchasing a home or when purchasing a home with SEE features. Realtors acknowledge that because there is no direct comparison, the financial risk poses a barrier as misconceptions exist with understanding the investment return.

Financial investment was a barrier also from the developer's standpoint. Building houses with SEE features was found to be necessary in shifting towards a more efficient housing market. Choosing to purchase homes with SEE features is not only at the discretion of the consumer as stakeholders also influence this behaviour. Developers/builders were found to be important influencers that could shift the market discourse. However, the findings also indicated that they were not fully invested in providing SEE features as options for consumers.

*“The biggest...well, there's two things, in resale. The biggest barrier is going to be, I would say, money...when they're first building it, it's the best time to be doing all this stuff. So, they do it and maybe it's going to be, I don't know, like, \$5,000.00 or \$10,000.00 more than the competition. But, the builders are saying...and, I think maybe the builders are making a presumption that, you know, that takes them out of the market. And, I really don't*

*agree with that, because that's not that much money, as far as, you know, of course it's money, but it's not...when you're talking about a mortgage, \$10,000.00 is not much money at all, you know, because they were going to be paying for it for the rest of their life. No, I shouldn't say that, but you know, it's amortized over a long period of time.” (Realtor 8).*

*“Certainly trying to get the new home builders involved in that, is...I think that would be key. Because really, the new home building, whether it's pricing, or decorating, or style, or whatever, really leads the market and resale follows.” (Realtor 11).*

The above quotes demonstrate the impact developers have in providing options for consumers during the first stage of a housing build. However, when sustainable and energy efficiency features are available, price remains a barrier as both realtors and consumers acknowledge a lack of understanding of the return for investing in these features. These price related barriers were commonly found throughout the data.

Consumers lifestyles and their relationship to financial investments emerged within the data. The current SEE housing market was perceived to not work with the lifestyles of the average Canadian as the SEE financial return was viewed to take longer than 10 years to realise and consumers would not live in their homes long enough to gain from those benefits.

*“The challenge here is...and probably the most...the clearest one that I can make an example to are solar panels on the roof of a home, just to make it really clear. There is a pay-off value for either a home that has them, or one that wants to get them installed, for example. Where you pay them off in 10 to 15 years generally, depending on, you know, how much money you're getting back from the government for the hydro you're selling, that you're making through them. And, so, you have to be in the home for ten plus years to be able to literally, maybe even break even on having that*

*sort of thing. It shows a monetary value. And, the average time that a Canadian...this was in a National study, the average time that a Canadian person will move is every 5.5 years. That's the average. Some more often, some less often. So, if the average person is moving every five years, it doesn't make a lot of sense for them to invest in a ten plus year system, because they're going to be just spending the money and not even getting the money back.... The challenge I would think, and I've seen this first-hand, when selling a home that has extra features that are meant for energy efficiency, is that the amount of money that the person who owns the property has spent on those is not directly returned...let's say it's a solar panel, I'll go back to. It's a very common one, the most common one, might cost you \$20,000.00 installing solar panels on the roof and you want to sell the property in a few years after you've installed it, you can't ask the home to be valued at the price of the market, plus \$20,000.00 because you've invested that money in the panels. It doesn't equate from dollar per dollar and sometimes people think it does. I put the money in and so, I need to get it back out. But, that isn't the case. And, even more so, the banks who have to do an appraisal on the property, they're kind of the last word in that sense of the value of the home for the buyer's mortgage, they also don't equate the appraisal value the same as a seller might think. Where, it's not dollar for dollar of what you spent on it that you get back from when you sell the house.”*  
(Realtor 12).

The above quote not only acknowledges how consumers' lifestyles act as a barrier to these long term SEE feature investments, but also demonstrates how banks and mortgage lenders impact the SEE decision-making process. They currently do not provide incentives that recognise the financial investment benefits that purchasing SEE features provide. These incentives (appraisals that recognise the increased value) would allow investors to receive an immediate return on their investment, thus curbing this long term investment barrier. Both realtors and consumers mentioned that information

regarding the financial return would improve SEE feature investments. A lack of information and knowledge about the financial return and the benefits from the investment was evident in the findings.

#### **4.3.2.2 Trust**

Trust was seen to mitigate uncertainties that existed regarding the performance of utility functions of the SEE features. The realtor/sales representative plays an important role in educating their buyer and are viewed as credible sources of information. It is common for the buyer and realtor to develop a strong relationship built on trust.

*"I'm year 32 in the business and my approach is such that I'm established enough as such that I can really offer consumer centric advice --so it's very educational, but the approach I take is to give them the benefit of my knowledge and experience and help educate them on certain things. Or if there's something they haven't considered about a particular neighbourhood or property I will say well it's great except for this and they'll go oh, we didn't even think of that. So I'd just like them to be aware before they jump into something that they've sort of seen things in a 360-degree manner. But that's one of the things that in my opinion a good realtor brings to the table. It's not that stuff, that sort of information that you experience. An extra set of eyes and sort of an informed opinion on things that they may just not think of, right?. And then when it gets to sort of inspection or construction of the property or things that you need or don't need to worry about I weigh in pretty heavily on that stuff too because I've been around a long time, I know. I have a fair bit of knowledge about construction and stuff. SO yeah, maintenance things. This is an unknown to them. You just help them out that way." (Realtor 3).*

This quote demonstrates that realtors identify themselves as educators in the buyer seller relationship. Information is used to reduce consumer dissonance regarding attributes that they buyer is unfamiliar with, this is expressed when

the realtor expressed providing insight into an area that the consumer would have otherwise worried about or not have included in their consideration set. The realtor views themselves as a credible resource for related information.

*"I think they rely heavily [on my advice] because it's more just the style of the agent, but myself personally I think they rely heavily because I form that relationship where they're always inquiring for information and relying on me for contacts and information, right?"*

(Realtor 6).

This quote demonstrates that the realtor views themselves as the first point of contact for stake holders within the housing related network. They view themselves as highly influential due to their trusting relationship with the buyer.

*"With clients, my job is to actually try to find out as much information as I can and share that with them and kind of be that knowledgeable person...it's a big responsibility I have, to support them... I think you earn trust, as you do with any business. You know, I think you earn trust, as you do with any business. And, I mean, I think if you are honest and you always tell the truth, people see that. You know, you support them in finding their choices and my plan is really listening-...like, they lean on me a lot."* (Realtor 8).

The realtor views themselves as a resource of information and as playing an important educational role on which the client depends. They identify the need for continual education in order to satisfy this role. This finding aligns with the literature on attitude formation and persuasion, as a home is a high involvement purchase and consumers are persuaded through a central route, which includes rich information and expert opinions (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986). Realtors play an important role in providing expert opinions which educate consumers about features within the home and provide overall feedback regarding benefits and risks associated with the various features. The consumer trusts their opinion as demonstrated at the end of the above quote.

#### **4.3.2.3 Information**

An increase in buyer knowledge is a trend that has been noted in the literature (Elder, et al., 1999; Beracha & Wintoki, 2013). The findings did align with this trend as both realtors and consumers discussed the in-depth process they went through to understand the attributes of a home that they considered purchasing. First time home buyers that belonged to a younger demographic were most likely to conduct a thorough information search online prior to viewing the home.

*“So first of all we search for information definitely on MLS or Realtor.ca it’s called now. So looking at it because it tells you a lot about what rooms, it gives you kind of some high level of what’s in the house and you can see pictures, so you can see some pictures of it. Pictures today are a little bit doctored in way, they kind of give you an illusion, so it’s not a 100% percent. So if it’s being sold by a realtor then definitely getting input from them like a head of time. As far as location goes, we actually drive to that location and see it from the outside before I even call because I want to see, well, what’s the neighbourhood like, you know? Is it on a busy street, you know, that kind of stuff. There are things that work a little bit for that if you don’t want to go there is Google Maps. You can actually go on Google Maps and actually go to the street view and you can see and you can actually drive along the street on Google Maps and you can go wherever you want so you can check out the neighbourhood. Now, it’s not current exactly but it was in like a year or two so it’s good enough if you just want to see what it looks like there.” (Participant 1).*

*“They’re a very educated group of buyers and sellers out there now, just simply because of freedom of information provided on the internet. And social media does play an impact, there’s no doubt about it. It used to be we’d say, “Have you seen our website?” Now it’s like, “What page of the website have you spend the most time looking [at]? ...the packages that I hand out to people now are very*



*seldom. It's okay, got it on my phone. Don't waste the paper, I've got that already. So now they're very knowledgeable. The younger people, the more they learn about it [sustainability] the more they're going to ask about it. But the older people, they're not going to learn about it so they're not going to ask about it.” (Realtor 6).*

Buyer knowledge was often discussed by the participants. The common theme was that people were more prepared when meeting with their realtor to purchase a home. They had gained knowledge about their potential future home through information that they had read online. Buyers were well informed and knowledge was also gained through social media. Knowledge about SEE features was seen as generational, with the younger generation arriving with more information and able to ask more specific SEE questions when meeting with realtors. These comments suggest that online information was a good way to communicate to buyers and that consumers are conducting a substantial information search prior to meeting with a realtor or sales representative.

Realtors play a pivotal role in educating buyers about aspects of the home. They are deemed to be a credible source and highly trusted. However, realtors are not fully informed about SEE features as these are a newer aspect of the housing industry. This lack of information was prevalent throughout the data.

*“Once I've introduced them to specific technologies that are on the properties they become interested and there's a heightened sense of awareness....the biggest barrier is the poor training for realtors. Most realtors don't have sustained training of real consequence. The bar of entry for real estate is extremely low and this hasn't even addressed the sustainable technologies we're talking about. Most realtors don't even know the difference between a 100 and 200 amp electrical panel. SO that's the main problem is the low barrier of entry and the low element of the education required to become a realtor. It's absolutely necessary for every realtor that's engaged in a contract to have*

*either the training or experience to correctly counsel their buyer clients. After all that is what the buyer is paying for.” (Realtor 1).*

The above quote demonstrates the realtors’ lack of awareness of SEE features and this aligned with the findings from the workshop observation which was discussed earlier in this chapter. When information was presented, it was to inform consumers about how the sustainable and energy efficient features would save them money. Earlier findings demonstrated that the buyer relies heavily on their trusting relationship with the realtor for information. The above quote demonstrates that a lack of knowledge exists among realtors and they are not only lacking information about the current trends within the housing market (SEE features), but also lack knowledge of basic housing features (electrical panel amps).

Being able to quantify cost savings was found to be an important tool in educating consumers about the SEE benefits. A Blower Door technique that tests the efficiency of a home by measuring its ‘seal’ is a common efficiency gauge in Canada (Sherman, 1995). Having quantifiable information, such as this test, was found to be important.

*“Like, if you were trying to market a house like that, then obviously the price is going to determine your market as well. But, to convince people that they might be buying like...like, if you have a certain price and one is energy efficient and the other one is not, the energy efficient one might be smaller, say, but, it's got all this other stuff. So, the other one will be bigger, but doesn't have the stuff. So, the idea is to convince...not convince, but educate people about what they're buying is a quality product and it's something that's going to be...it's going to be around for awhile...one of the things is, has this house been energy rated? But, it's not a mandatory field to tick off. So, you know, if it were and it was a good test, then you'd be happy to do it. But, the concern is that people with maybe a lower score, their house might be, I don't know, prejudice against or whatever, but. But, that's a step, you know. It's a step.” (Realtor 11).*

The above quote demonstrates that information regarding energy efficiency ratings within a home is seen as a tool to assist consumers in understanding the price barrier, by providing transparency to the uncertainties that exist. The above quote mentions an energy rating that could be mandatory among homes not only allowing buyers to make a more informed choice, but also incentivising consumers to get a good rating within their own home. The energy rating test that the realtor is referring to is the Blower Door technique used in Canada for testing housing efficiency.

As mentioned above in the High Involvement Barriers, consumers are interested in learning and understanding how SEE features will save them money. They are highly involved in understanding this aspect of the home however, not as involved in understanding details regarding attributes that serve a utility function within the home. In other words, consumers care to understand how SEE features save them money, but don't care to understand how these features work. This is demonstrated by the following quote.

*"You know; they don't really think that much about how they [SEE features] work. It's usually me who talks about that. So, usually I point out, okay, this is a house that was built in 1952. Okay, as soon as we look at this house we know, yeah, it probably isn't...if it's got the original wiring, it's not grounded. It probably doesn't have much in the line of insulation. If anything, it's probably the bag insulation...the old bag insulation that was minimally effective."*  
(Realtor 8).

Consumers strive to understand that SEE features save them money and information was viewed to be most persuasive in forming a positive attitude towards the product when it demonstrated the cost savings. Most consumers want to be reassured about the cost savings and are not interested in knowing the details of how this occurs.

Participants revealed that they were interested in learning more about SEE features. The need for realtor education was prevalent throughout the

interviews and some even expressed the type of education that they would like to have. The quote below provides an explicit statement which aligned with this need for SEE education among realtors.

*“I would just like to see someone like yourself involved in operating a two-hour course. It can't be a whole lot longer than that. Maybe touch it to three, but that would be, like a 9 to 12 – and ... because we are always getting paged and texted and everything else, but if someone like yourself, along with the builder, because that way it offsets the builder's interest only. This is where it's a combination of hey, we have an educator as well as a builder and they're saying hey, this could be the direction we want to go.” (Realtor 3).*

Realtors acknowledge their lack of information regarding SEE features and the above quote demonstrates that they view the researcher as a credible source of information. It is implied that information coming from the builder is biased by their interests, making the researcher a more credible source of information as they are viewed as having nothing to lose by sharing information.

#### **4.3.2.4 Ethical Motivation**

The need to reduce dissonance through the purchasing of ethical products was motivated by climate change concerns, environmental emissions impact and other outer directed/external aspects. Consumers did demonstrate that they were consciously aware of several ethical constructs, however, their motivation was mostly outer directed. Research indicates that both environmental and economic benefits occur for individual Canadians when SEE concepts are incorporated into housing. However, adoption of these concepts is slow (Green Building Council 2016). The following quotes demonstrate that the environment is a strong ethical motivation for consumers.

*“It will come, it will come and it will be important in our industry, and we will have to learn about it. But right now, we don't really know much about it, which is sad 'cause we should.” (Participant 1).*

*“I would definitely purchase a home with sustainable features. I do think the environment is important and if there’s a way to not tax the environment more than necessary with materials or you know, waste from the home, that definitely interests me.” (Participant 2).*

*“I mean everybody likes to get a deal at Walmart but when you realise what it ultimately is costing us that's where we fall down because I think frankly advertisers and marketers are good at pushing the immediate benefit to the consumer on just about any product. The social costs and environmental costs get sort of pushed to the side right? And then you realise that you need to get back to David Suzuki and say this is great but look what's happening. Look what it's actually costing us to do this, to drive here and to heat this way and to live in these big houses, and whatever right? Just to be sloppy and over consume stuff, right?” (Realtor 3).*

Participants identified environmental issues and awareness in the findings. When asked questions about motivation to purchase a house with SEE features, environmental and outer directed motivations were commonly presented in the findings.

#### **4.3.2.5 Signalling**

Signalling theory is useful in describing the communication between two parties and is sometimes honest or dishonest in nature. A dishonest signal usually benefits the signaller (Connelly et al., 2011). A house can be used as a signalling tool, as can the features/attributes within the house, such as SEE features.

*“I think the people that are buying the houses are buying it to say that they bought it. That's really – of the people that I know that bought them, when you talk to them about their house they go on and on about how energy efficient it is and all of this recycled board*

*and that kind of stuff. Most of them don't talk about any money that they're saving.” (Realtor 6).*

*“People who do have the Teslas are totally proud to show you, or their electric Beamer or whatever it is. They just wear it [SEE features] kind of as their badge of whatever as they live in this huge sustainable house and but have four cars in the driveway and whatever, right?...But our society and that's where it really is gonna point to more societal pressure.” (Realtor 3).*

The above quotes demonstrate the signalling motivation existing within this high involvement domain. Consumers are interested in sharing with others the ethical contributions that their SEE home has on society and not the cost savings gained from the SEE home, which was demonstrated in the earlier findings as being the most important SEE attribute to consumers. These quotes also demonstrate that participants believed that SEE homes and SEE features are used as potential signals to the less affluent. This signal would be used by the owners to separate class (haves from the have nots). However, the main signal is not about price, but rather signalling to others their care for the environment.

*“And the younger people, it's all about more than eye candy. Granite and hardwood and high-end fixtures, light fixtures and faucets. They're going to judge, superficially, the quality of the look of the neighbourhood...” “I mean a lot of young families especially, they want to go into new construction 'cause they like the concept of new...We need, like a, this is your environmentally friendly neighbourhood. Then people would look at it.” (Realtor 4).*

The above quote demonstrates that signalling of a SEE home would be more powerful if the buyer could signal to others that they live in a sustainable neighbourhood.

Signalling is perceived positively by other homeowners as acknowledged in the following quote.

*"I'm impressed when I drive by and I can visibly see that there's solar panelling even though it's maybe eventually going to become more subtle. I think that's great that people are contributing positively to community and the world." (Participant 10).*

This demonstrates that consumers' perception of signalling is correct as reference groups positively acknowledge the SEE features as signalling an overall care for the environment.

#### **4.3.3 Conclusion**

The findings in the high involvement ethical consumption domain present relationships among driving factors that were identified by realtors and consumers in the SEE housing market. These driving factors were trust, information, ethical motivation and signalling. Barriers that prevent consumers from purchasing ethical products were also identified as price and misconceptions. The relationships among the driving factors and the barriers were discussed. Several of the findings aided in answering the research questions and this will be discussed in Chapter 5.

## **Chapter 5**

### **5.1 Discussion**

This thesis contributes to the existing knowledge in consumer behaviour in several ways. The main contribution is in the field of research on ethical consumerism, a phenomenon that has attracted significant scholarly attention and has important managerial consequences. It introduces the Ethical Elaboration and Product Involvement Framework which informs the research process. Beyond the specific context of research, this thesis presents important implications for the high involvement domain of consumer research. It contributes to the literature of high involvement ethical products, illustrating constructs that influence decision-making and discusses how these constructs differ between levels of ethical product involvement. The research objectives are addressed and both theoretical and managerial contributions are noted throughout the chapter. To reiterate, the research objectives are: to explore how high involvement ethical decisions differ from low involvement ethical decisions, to identify and compare the antecedents of low and high involvement decisions, to understand the relationship between involvement and consumption, to explore the gap between attitudes and behaviour. Finally, it contributes to research by addressing existing barriers that perpetuate the attitude behaviour gap of both ethical products sold at a farmers' market, and sustainable and energy efficient features sold within the housing market. This chapter is organised along these different themes. First, the main implications of the studies are reviewed and contextualised across both the high involvement and low involvement ethical product consumption domains. The attitude-behaviour gap is then examined and related findings regarding construct relationships are expanded on, as well as the managerial implications, more specifically, the themes of trust, information, ethical motivation and signalling. Subsequently, the theoretical contributions of this thesis to other fields of consumer research are discussed. Specific attention is dedicated to the implications of this research to practitioners, specifically in the high involvement domain with an in-depth discussion regarding the sustainable and energy efficiency debate. The related benefits are described and a conceptual model for translating this research into practice is introduced.



Finally, the limitations are acknowledged and the directions of future research are identified. The following table summarises the research objectives and the corresponding theoretical and managerial contributions developed by this study

Table 4. Theoretical and Managerial Contributions Offered by this Research

<b>Objectives</b>	<b>Theoretical Contribution</b>	<b>Managerial Contribution</b>
<b>Objective 1:</b> To explore how high involvement ethical decisions, differ from low involvement ethical decisions.	<b>A.</b> Demonstrates that similar constructs are approached differently by the decision maker. Therefore, each involvement domain should be studied independently and literature findings should not be generalised across levels.	High involvement products with ethical features (such as a SEE home) should rely on high involvement literature as well as ethical consumption literature when developing a positioning strategy. More specifically, it should refer to the emerging high involvement ethical consumption literature.
<b>Objective 2:</b> To identify and compare the antecedents of low and high involvement decisions.	<b>B.</b> Further developed the antecedents found within the literature by comparing the relationships between involvement levels. <b>C.</b> Barriers are discussed and findings examine the relationships between misconceptions, information, ethical motivation, and signalling. A strong relationship exists between information and price in the high involvement domain.	Marketers should provide information regarding cost recovery due to the increased financial risk found within the high involvement ethical product domain. This will aid in reducing the attitude-behaviour gap in this domain.  An efficiency rating via a 'Blower Door' test should be mandatory and included in all housing listings. This recommendation will address barriers among all stakeholder levels.
<b>Objective 3:</b> To understand the relationship between involvement and consumption.	<b>D.</b> Demonstrates that consumers' environmental motivation towards ethical consumption is more outwardly focused in the high involvement domain and more inwardly focused in the low involvement domain.	When advertising towards environmental motivation, marketers should focus on the positive contributions high involvement products make towards climate change, the environment, and other macro/global impacts. For low involvement products, marketers should highlight the positive impact that these environmental features have on the consumers' health.
<b>Objective 4:</b> To explore the gap between attitudes and behaviour.	<b>E.</b> Identifies barriers as the most significant and common category. This illustrates the existence of the attitude-behaviour gap as established in the literature. <b>F.</b> Gains insight into this gap by comparing the relationships of constructs to the identified barriers.	Developing trust within the seller and buyer relationship is very important on both levels of ethical product involvement. Trust significantly reduces misconceptions that act as consumption barriers within these domains.

The following discusses the main findings from the study. Interpretations were made from the findings in light of results from similar, previous studies published in peer reviewed journals, theories and concepts from the field, and other relevant aspects relating to this research area. The findings relate to the research objectives, and theoretical and managerial implications will be discussed when applicable.

## **5.2 Gap Between Attitudes and Behaviour**

The following addresses the attitude-behaviour gap found in the low involvement and high involvement ethical consumption domains. When analysing the transcriptions from this study and coding the findings, the most common hierarchical category within the analysis was 'Barriers'. Barriers consist of all identified findings that align with the concept of an attitude-behaviour gap. These findings strengthened and underscored the ethical consumption gap that was found in the literature. This appeared in the findings as barriers, which can be broken down further into several related and mutually exclusive themes. Once an understanding of the relationship between the constructs and the barriers was established, contributions emerged revealing that barriers could be removed, thus potentially reducing this gap between attitudes and behaviour.

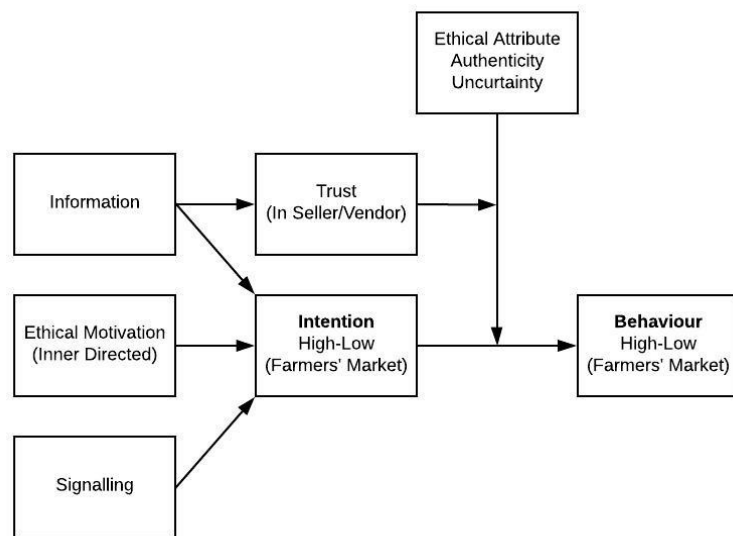
In the case of ethical consumption at the farmers' market, the most significant barrier was identified as a lack of convenience. This was broken down further into shopping location convenience which fit with daily routines, and product offering convenience which focused on the one stop shopping that larger grocery chains allowed. Although lack of convenience was the largest barrier, it was not considered to be a significant finding based on previous studies prevalent in the literature. Misconceptions about ethical attributes prevent consumers from purchasing ethical products and this was also identified as a common barrier. Trust and its relationship with misconceptions, information, ethical motivation and signalling provided additional insight into the attitude-behaviour gap and will be discussed in greater details in the following sections. Household income demographic influence will also be discussed.

In the case of ethical consumption in the housing market, both regular home features and SEE home features, price was found to be the most important barrier to purchasing features/attributes and upgrades. This is not to be confused with the overall cost and amount that purchasers would be willing to spend on the house, as consumers determine this through the bank before they commence their search. However, while searching for their home, this barrier emerged as consumers determined what they deemed to be valuable and worth the extra expense. For example, when looking at utilities or the inner workings of a house, questions emerged about what the cost was to run these features and how the home would work in the future after they purchased the upgrades etcetera. Questions regarding price/cost were viewed to be the most important construct in the decision-making process of buying a house with SEE features. Even though this was seen as the most important issue, the barrier to purchasing SEE features was the lack of knowledge regarding the financial return of the initial monetary outlay for the energy efficient features. Also, a concern existed that when selling their home in the future, the additional expenses from purchasing these features may not be recuperated in the short term. Therefore, on the one hand, the most significant concern is the price to operate the house, and on the other hand, the biggest barrier is uncertainty regarding the return from the extra expense from SEE features. This was seen as an unfortunate misalignment of information, as the sole purpose of SEE features is to reduce the operating cost of running a house, which directly addresses the main concern in the findings (price and financial return). The managerial implication must address this consumption barrier by looking at its relationship to price and knowledge. The upfront price of efficiency features needs to be demonstrated and positioned through knowledge as an answer to this number one concern regarding the cost of utilities. Right now there isn't concrete information that is provided to consumers so they can understand the cost savings and thus reduce this barrier. It is interesting that the biggest barrier is actually the main strength of the SEE features and great potential exists to address this if information is framed and disseminated properly.

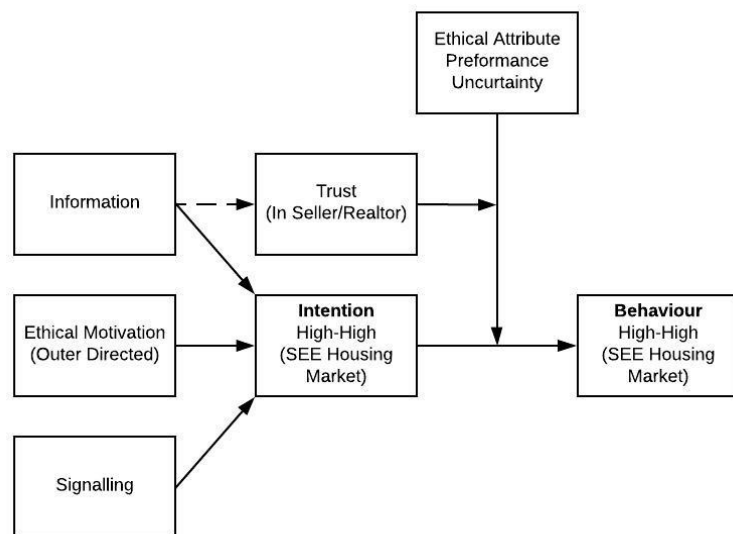
### 5.3 Conceptual Framework

Conceptual frameworks were developed to illustrate how the findings fit within the ethical decision-making process. Conceptual Framework Constructs of High Ethical Elaboration and Low Product Involvement and Conceptual Framework Constructs of High Ethical Elaboration and High Product Involvement provide insights into the attitude-behaviour gap by further expanding on identified moderating constructs. These relationships are expanded on in the following discussion.

*Figure 28. Constructs of High Ethical Elaboration & Low Product Involvement*

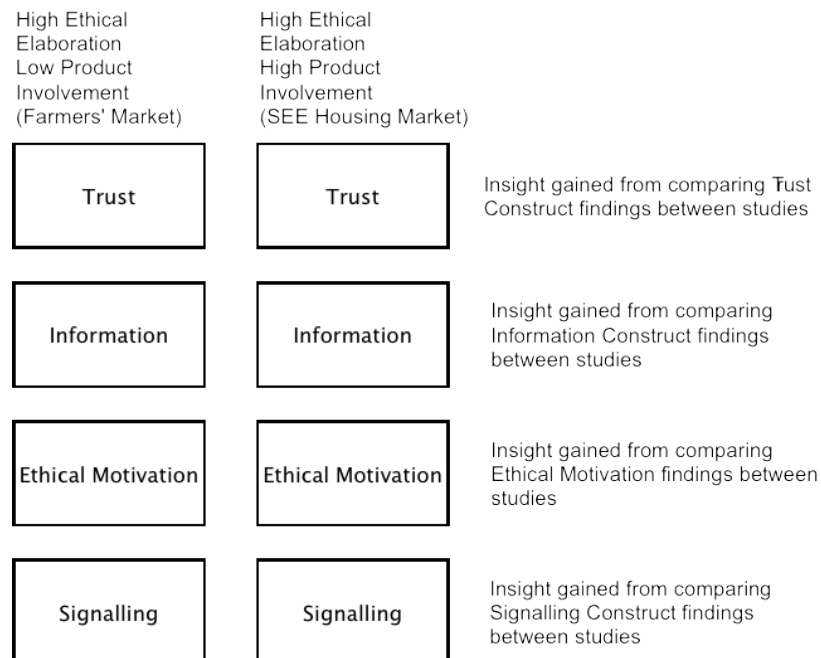


*Figure 29. Constructs of High Ethical Elaboration & High Product Involvement*



The conceptual framework, Exploration and Comparison of Antecedent Constructs, provides an illustration of this comparison between involvement levels. This framework illustrates the antecedent comparison and analysis between High Ethical Elaboration and Low Product Involvement (Farmers' Market) and High Ethical Elaboration and High Product Involvement (SEE house). The following framework illustrates the analysis that was conducted between involvement levels and the insights gained can be found throughout this discussion chapter.

*Figure 30. Exploration and Comparison of Antecedent Constructs*



The following sections discuss the insights gained from comparing the construct findings between the studies. A discussion regarding the theoretical and practical contributions of the findings will take place as well as a comparison of the insights gained between the involvement levels. This discussion will be linked back to the relevant figures above. First, the construct of trust and its relationship with misconceptions will be discussed, followed by information, ethical motivation and signalling. Findings related to household income will also be discussed.

### **5.3.1 *Trust and Misconceptions***

Misconceptions emerged in the data as a significant category that contributed to the purchasing barrier in both the high and low ethical involvement domains. Misconceptions existed regarding the uncertainty of the authenticity or the performance of sustainable or ethical attributes. This uncertainty led to a greater importance of the relationships between the consumers and the vendors/realtors. Developing trust within these relationships lessened the barriers and offset the cognitive dissonance created by these misconceptions. Constructs, such as price, knowledge, involvement, and vendor/realtor relationships were experienced as a function of these existing misconceptions within this domain. For example, at the farmers' market misconceptions existed surrounding the ethical features of the products. Consumers were unsure if the products were truly local, with the products consistently coming from a local farm, or if sometimes products were sold from the Toronto Food Terminal. Similarly, there was uncertainty around whether the products were truly organic, or if sometimes there were chemicals used during production. These were the misconceptions that existed within this domain. Due to these misconceptions, the relationships with the seller (vendor/farmer) becomes a means to reduce this uncertainty through the building of trust. This even existed when consumers reported that they recognised discrepancies within a booth (for example, a booth that has advertised as selling local but also having products that are out of season, or in more than one case, selling lemons or avocados-products that are not grown in Canada. Consumers reported that although they recognised these discrepancies, purchasing directly from the vendor reduced this dissonance and allowed consumers to still form an overall positive assessment of the products purchased due to the vendor relationship and the resulting trust that they had formed. This trust did not eliminate the misconceptions, but instead reduced the cognitive dissonance allowing consumers to feel more positive about their purchase. These relationships are illustrated in Figure 28 Constructs of High Ethical Elaboration and Low Product Involvement.

Similarly, in the high ethical product involvement domain, misconceptions existed regarding the uncertainty of the performance of utility functions of SEE

features. These misconceptions existed around the SEE features of the products and the likelihood that they would actually reduce efficiency and thus result in cost savings for the consumer. The realtor/sales representative plays an important role in reducing this dissonance through building trust with their clients. Due to the lack of information that currently exists with the seller (who plays a pivotal role), the consumer is not reassured within their relationship. This contributes to this barrier as misconceptions are not addressed. This is especially heightened due to the financial risk associated with a high involvement product, leading to a greater unwillingness to purchase SEE features. These relationships are illustrated in Figure 29 Constructs of High Ethical Elaboration and High Product Involvement.

When comparing the low involvement domain to the high involvement domain, similarities and differences existed when examining the trust construct and its relationship to misconceptions and knowledge. In both domains, misconceptions existed. In the low involvement domain these misconceptions exist due to the uncertainty of the authenticity of ethical attributes within the products. Trusting relationships with vendors was crucial in reducing this barrier as they provided credible information that reduced the consumers' cognitive dissonance due to these misconceptions. In the high involvement domain, these misconceptions also existed due to the uncertainty of the performance of SEE features and the financial risks associated with the unknown returns. The relationship between the realtor and the buyer was also one built on trust and realtors (like vendors) are critical in influencing consumers and providing information to aid in their decision-making process. However, unlike the low involvement domain, realtors are unable to provide sufficient information that addresses the concerns regarding SEE features and therefore are unable to close the consumption barrier caused by these uncertainties.

### **5.3.2 Information and Involvement**

In the low involvement domain, information was vital in changing consumers' perceptions about their shopping routines, as well as their expectations and understanding of produce offerings. Information provided by the vendors about



the ethical features (use of pesticides, locally grown, organic, etcetera) ensured that their products were purchased. Information regarding the lack of pesticides used on products was viewed as important in closing the gap when there were misconceptions regarding the use of chemicals. The consumers' concern regarding ethical features (chemicals used in the environment) related mostly to a concern towards their personal health. Providing information to the consumer to reduce this concern was an important way in reducing this barrier to consumption.

The relationship between the above-mentioned consumption barrier (under Trust and Misconceptions) and the construct of involvement regarding SEE homes will now be discussed. When looking at the high involvement literature, a high need for cognition (the need to process information, to know and understand) commonly exists when attitudes are formed towards high involvement products. This is the extent to which an individual is willing and able to 'think' about the object and its supporting materials as discussed in the Elaboration Likelihood Model in Chapter 2 (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986). However, although the involvement process is very high, consumers don't strive to understand the details of the features of which they are purchasing, instead, they strive to know how it will save them money. Perhaps consumers are thinking about it slightly differently within this domain than what the literature suggests. This has managerial implications that should be taken into consideration when addressing a high involvement product with ethical features. For the most part consumers are not aligning with the high involvement literature where they strive to read and understand and be involved with attributes when forming an attitude towards the product. Most consumers simply want to be reassured about the cost savings and are not interested in knowing the details of how this occurs. For example, with a multi attribute model that looks at attitude towards the object, consumers evaluate their overall assessment of the object based on the existence of attributes that the consumer deems to be satisfactory (Shiffman et al., 2013). When this is a level of high involvement, the consumer elaborates more on each specific attribute. For example, when purchasing a computer, a consumer may elaborate on the specific attributes such as the importance of battery life,

weight of the computer, screen size, brand features, memory, and ram. A positive attitude towards the object (in this case the computer) will occur when the product consists of a favourable amount of these identified attributes (Shifman, 2013). However, when it came to SEE homes, people were not as inclined to know the inner workings and the details about the SEE attributes, which does not align with the high involvement attitude formation literature. A limitation to this argument is due to the current unfamiliarity of SEE features to the consumer. Future research should explore this further with a high involvement product that is slightly more familiar to consumers, such as electric/hybrid cars (as discussed below in the limitations and future research section). These findings regarding high ethical product decision-making, add another dimension to the literature as suggested by the Ethical Elaboration and Product Involvement Framework (EEPIF) proposed within this thesis. High involvement ethical consumption decision-making should be researched as an extension to the high involvement literature. Even though a higher elaboration occurs, it is mostly based on price and not on the details of the SEE attributes/features.

Another interesting finding will now be discussed regarding the relationship between knowledge and price, and SEE homes, through the comparison of the findings from a regular home and from a SEE home. An example was given by several realtors that there should be an efficiency benchmark, which could easily be provided and included in advertisements on MLS listings of homes. This could be accomplished by having a standardised Blower Door test. The “Blower Door” describes a technique that tests the air flow pressure by pressurizing or depressurizing a building. This test involves a fan that is fitted and sealed to a door and is used to blow air throughout the home to measure air tightness and uncover hidden air leakages throughout the home (Sherman, 1995). This standardised test provides a number so that a quantifiable comparison can occur and consumers can become knowledgeable (on a high level) regarding the efficiency of the home. This benchmark will reduce the contradiction barrier that exists regarding the cost return of investing in SEE features. Similarly, the fuel efficiency or mileage (litres/100 km) of a car, informs the consumer and allows them to make an

informed decision when purchasing a car based on fuel efficiency. If consumers then wanted to make a more efficient purchase of a house, they would be able to do so due to the transparency of the efficiency information. Also, by including this information, it keeps energy efficiency top of the consumers' mind and this benchmark would also have an impact throughout all levels of stakeholders from product design, sales representatives, and potentially to mortgage lenders.

Even with the known benefits of SEE homes which include decreased operating costs, a healthier living space, and a smaller ecological footprint, issues still exist with the acceptance of these new environmentally friendly features. Issues identified within the literature were the management of the different cost structures and lack of education regarding the asset. Increased knowledge to the realtor and the buyer, as well as education of the threefold benefits described above, are the areas that need the greatest attention for the advancement of SEE housing. This research found that the lack of education regarding the assets was considered to be an issue among the participants. Findings suggest that online information would be a good way to communicate SEE features to buyers as consumers are conducting a substantial information search prior to meeting with a realtor or sales representative. Similarly, realtors mentioned the importance for the buyer to physically see features for the purpose of educating them about the utility or functionality of a specific home feature. This was seen as an important way of educating the buyer regarding a benefit of an unfamiliar feature. Future SEE features, when applicable, should also be presented in the home as a tangible model that can be physically seen by the buyer. Beyond the SEE feature information, challenges that were identified included a lack of information regarding long term financial benefits. This should also be stressed in future communications.

In the literature, information accelerates justice restoration potential of ethical products based on consumers' belief in a just world (Urban et al., 1996). Consumers support fair trade products when their belief in a just world is high and the conditions presented a high need for justice restoration potential rather

than low justice restoration potential (White et al., 2012). Information is found to be a force that drives the consumer forward to consume and reduce injustices (for example environmental degradation, child labour, animal testing, etcetera). However, in the high involvement domain, it is important to recognize that information is not only about restoring justice in relation to Lerner's 1980 highly cited monograph, *The Belief in a Just World: A Fundamental Delusion*, but also about cost recovery due to the heightened financial risk within this domain. Information also accelerated the consumer to purchase the ethical products once there was a clear understanding as to how the product reduced their financial risk.

### **5.3.3 Ethical Motivation**

When comparing across involvement level and when asking questions regarding conscious consumption and the emerging categories about ethical/environmental motivation, two related themes emerged from this category. Inner directedness, and outer directedness were the decided themes that emerged from the various involvement level domains. When comparing this contrast between low and high domains, consumer motivations were found to be inner directed within the low involvement domain and outer directed within the high involvement domain as depicted in both Figure 28 and Figure 29. Inner directed consisted of ethical motivating factors that related to one's being, for example: buying local, organic or chemical free features, quality, and the reduced cognitive dissonance from the trust built out of vendor relationships. These ethical motivations related to the concern for one's own health or the health of their family and this theme emerged within the low involvement domain. Therefore, although consumers were consciously aware of several ethical constructs, their motivation was mostly inner directed.

When examining the environmental/ethical motivation category within the high involvement ethical consumption domain, the need to reduce dissonance through the purchasing of ethical products also existed, however this motivation was found to be more outer directed/external. Outer directed consisted of ethical motivating factors that related to the environment. This included: climate change concerns, environment emissions impact, and also

the importance of signalling to others the perception that they care about the environment. These ethical motivations related to the concern for the greater environment and this themes emerged within the high involvement domain. Therefore, although consumers were consciously aware of several ethical constructs, their motivation was mostly outer directed.

The ethical motivation for those that were buying at the farmers' market was mostly to 'save themselves' as opposed to 'save the world'. Even though concern existed for the environment (for example, a concern over the distance the products travelled to get to them and the resulting carbon footprint), they were mostly motivated by the chemicals that were being used and the impact that this would have on their health. Therefore, inner directed was viewed as 'save themselves'. On the other hand, concern for the environment (for example, efficient utilities that resulted in a reduction of carbon emissions as well as the reduced environmental impact during the production stage), was viewed as 'save the world' as seen within the high involvement ethical product decision-making domain.

#### **5.3.4 Signalling**

A socially conscious consumer was defined as, "a consumer who takes into account the public consequences of his or her private consumption or who attempts to use his or her purchasing power to bring about social change" (Webster, 1975, p. 188). The findings suggest that consumers purchasing a SEE home are not as focused on social change, but more on the signalling impact. This suggests that high involvement ethical products are either not purchased by socially conscious consumers or that socially conscious consumers are also considering other factors such as the signalling impact of the purchase.

The findings from the research studies suggested that consumers purchasing a home with SEE features are highly focused on the signalling impact of the social change in relation to their purchase. The signalling theme that emerged in the findings is prevalent within the luxury consumption literature. These findings provide insight into the primary issues of SEE home acceptance.

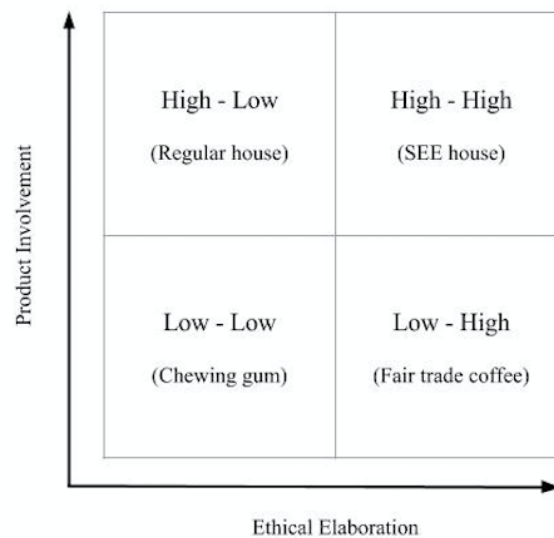
### **5.3.5 Household Income Influence**

When cross analysing the identified influences impacting ethical decision-making with consumers' household income, it was found that those belonging to a lower household income bracket identified tradition and security as constructs that influence their ethical consumption behaviour. This was an interesting finding as it differed from related literature which identified tradition and security as values associated with less ethical or less sustainable consumption patterns (Vermeir & Verbeke, 2006). The research questioned whether past literature sampled a diverse population when gathering data. Future research should explore this further by cross analysing the ethical decision-making process with household income.

### **5.4 Ethical Elaboration and Product Involvement Framework**

This study demonstrates that consumers experience ethical decision-making differently based on the level of product involvement. One of the research implications of this thesis was the development of a research process framework that informed the research approach. This framework positions ethical elaboration as an extension of product involvement allowing both high and low ethical product domains to be compared and expanded on separately. This framework identifies an area of ethical consumption that has been understudied in the ethical decision-making literature (the upper right quadrant). The following revisits the Ethical Elaboration and Product Involvement Framework (EEPIF).

Figure 31. Ethical Elaboration and Product Involvement Framework (EEPIF)



Products that have a higher financial risk, higher social risk, or require extended problem solving are considered to be high involvement products (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986). This is represented in the upper quadrants of the EEPIF. Whereas products that have a lower financial risk, lower social risk and are routinised items are considered to be low involvement products (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986). This is represented in the lower quadrants of the EEPIF. In addition to traditional consumption choices, ethical consumerism considers personal moral choices regarding social non-traditional aspects of products (Carrigan et al., 2004). Consumers who consider environmental, animal, and ethical issues are referred to in the literature as 'ethical consumers' (Shaw, 2005). This is represented along the horizontal axis, with the left representing less ethical elaboration and the right representing greater ethical elaboration. The framework built on the literature and provides an approach to studying ethical decision-making across involvement domains.

The findings of this research provide insight into the primary issues of SEE home acceptance that have been identified within the literature. The exploratory study revealed common themes that were helpful in shaping the main studies research questions on this topic. The themes were expanded upon and new insights of trust, information, ethical motivation and signalling

were gained as well as an understanding of their relationship to the decision-making process.

Some consistencies were found with low involvement ethical consumption literature and this high involvement ethical consumption study. Tanner and Kast (2003) found that purchasing behaviour within this category could be categorised as both personal and contextual. The personal influences include attitudes, personal norms, perceived behaviour barriers and knowledge. The contextual influences include socioeconomic characteristics, living conditions, and store characteristics (Tanner & Kast, 2003). This was consistent in the findings of this study.

### **5.5 Sustainable and Energy Efficiency Debate**

The following provides an overview of the existing debate regarding sustainable and energy efficient homes and the related context impacted by this emerging domain. The issues, and challenges that relate to the national level and individual level are discussed, as well as the introduction to related stakeholders and various levels of impact this domain reaches. Following this debate, the related benefits gained will be discussed in detail.

The primary issues impeding wide acceptance of SEE homes are management of the different cost structure and lack of education regarding the asset. Traditionally, homes are built, and then utility costs are shouldered on an ongoing basis. The technology that allows for significantly decreased utility expenses may have a greater upfront cost. However, the offset is a small, or in the case of Net Zero, near non-existent ongoing utility bill. This would frequently be experienced as a slightly higher mortgage payment (as the mortgage finances the cost to build the home) and a smaller utility payment. The total housing expenses would remain the same or be slightly less. However, the public, financing institutions, and other professionals associated with the home building and residential mortgage lender process must be educated on this model in order for it to be effective.



In addition to environmental, the economic implications of real estate are also substantial and this not only has an impact on a national scale, but also to the individual and their impending decisions relating to SEE home features. The Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) indicates that housing-related expenses accounted for over seventeen percent of Canada's 2015 gross domestic product (CMHC, 2016). Specifically, residential real estate construction and existing home sales stimulate the economy through the creation of jobs, investment opportunities, and government revenue streams (through taxation and fees). There were over 187,000 new homes constructed in Canada in 2013 (slightly above the fifty-year average), creating nearly 300,000 jobs (CMHC, 2014). On an individual level, owner-occupied housing provides not only the primary residence and shelter for over two-thirds of Canadians, but also the average owner's greatest source of wealth and savings. Analysis of new home construction indicates that households in SEE homes consumed approximately forty percent less power (Paulsen, 2012). Additionally, SEE homes used between fifty and 182 litres of potable water per capita daily, as compared to the Canadian average of 251 litres (CMHC, 2014). These drastic usage reductions result in notably lower utility bills, offering the economic benefits of both savings and budget stability to the SEE home owners. These benefits, along with the increased resale value of their home, also attribute to wealth creation.

Governments across Canada have already committed to the importance of SEE in real estate. This is evidenced through a variety of incentivising and requisite programs initiated by government bodies, ranging from the municipal to the federal level. Two encouragement programs worth note are the EQUilibrium Sustainable Housing Demonstration Initiative and the Net Zero Energy Housing program. EQUilibrium is a national-level program in which CMHC selected from over eighty applications, eleven sustainable housing projects to be developed across the country. The project began in 2006 and provided \$60,000 to each selected program (CMHC, 2014). The Net Zero Energy Housing program is a federal-level partnership between Natural Resources Canada and Owens Corning Canada which provides four million dollars to five home builders for the construction of a total of twenty-five Net

Zero homes across the country. Five of these homes were constructed in the City of Guelph, where this research took place. This initiative is part of Canada's ecoENERGY Innovation Initiative which supports energy projects that drive innovation, (Owens Corning Canada, 2013). In complementary action, many governments are beginning to require SEE aspects in real estate. For example, the 2012 changes to the Ontario Building Code instituted energy requirements for the first time in history. It is estimated that within two code revisions (2022), the building code will require energy efficiency in line with Net Zero – the cutting-edge technology currently being supported by the federal government grants. Therefore, what is at the forefront of innovation right now could be part of the baseline building code in less than ten years. This is a very short timeframe in which to make such extreme changes, especially for real estate, an asset with a lifespan that can easily exceed one hundred years.

It is clear that SEE in real estate is an issue of global significance, and one of particular importance to Canadians. Research indicates both environmental and economic benefits for the country as a whole and for individual Canadians when SEE concepts are incorporated into housing, and Canadian governments at all levels are supporting such advancements. However, adoption of these concepts is slow. Examination of the leading SEE certification programs indicates that Canada is lagging behind the United States of America and many Western European countries in adoption of the programs. Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) has over 60,000 certified real estate projects across the globe, with more than seventy-five percent in the United States of America (where LEED began). Canada has the second-largest number of LEED projects, with more than four thousand but only ten percent of those have been completed and certified. Of those 405 projects, only 79 are homes (Green Building Council, 2016). Energy Star is a United States of America based certification program that identifies homes which are at least twenty percent more energy efficient than required by building code. Only twenty-eight percent of new homes constructed in Ontario in 2013 met the Energy Star requirements, with other provinces reporting lower participation rates (DCN News Services, 2014). On a very high level, the

above mentioned gaps in relation to the common intention–behaviour gap was consistent within the more theoretical ethical consumption literature.

Low adoption of SEE homes is not for lack of technology or its newness to the market. For decades, it has been known that, in Canada, the majority of residential energy usage (fifty-seven percent) goes toward heating living spaces. In the 1970s, builders discovered how much heat was lost through a home's "holes." The average Canadian home has cracks and crevasses totalling 1,400 cm<sup>2</sup>. By better designing the building's "envelope," these holes can be plugged, drastically decreasing the energy needed to heat the space. The technology to test and fix this has been in existence for years, with builders constructing a Saskatchewan home in 1977 that was so air-tight it could be heated all winter by a hair dryer (Paulsen, 2012). Other such developments have existed, and have been consistently refined over the past several decades, providing the technological tools needed to mass-produce SEE homes.

### ***5.5.1 Theoretical Contributions to the SEE Housing Domain***

The following will outline the benefits of the research findings as well as the movement towards sustainable and energy efficient houses. More specifically, it will discuss the positive impacts towards the discipline, scholarship, society, as well as knowledge and past findings.

#### ***5.5.1.1 Contributions to Discipline***

This research will advance the SEE body of literature. This is a young, burgeoning field of research, currently growing in many disciplines and subjects, including real estate and marketing. The research adds to the existing conversations in several important ways. First, the majority of the SEE real estate research is on commercial assets, such as office buildings, retail, etc., and focuses on financial implications such as rental rate and sales price premiums. The limited research completed on residential sustainable and energy efficient real estate also focuses on sales price premiums, not the decision-making process. Currently, there is no work examining ways to increase ethical consumption within this domain. Within the marketing

discipline, most of the work on ethical consumption to-date deals with low-commitment products. On the contrary, this research addresses what could be considered the highest-commitment product purchase decision, as in the majority of households the home is the single largest investment and asset, a high involvement product. Lastly, most SEE research to-date, across the business disciplines, is quantitative in nature. This research provided a unique opportunity by applying a qualitative methodology to the research questions, which complemented the existing body of work.

#### **5.5.1.2 Scholarly Contributions**

The scholarly contributions of this research are immense. In addition to advancing the burgeoning SEE literature in the real estate and marketing fields, this research provides an outstanding opportunity to continue in the development of this body of work from this doctoral thesis and beyond. The chosen research topic expanded SEE decision-making knowledge within consumer behaviour and this research provides an opportunity to build on that portfolio. This research offers an opportunity to work with qualitative data in a unique study, which is a new aspect to the SEE real estate literature. Advancing SEE academic work was accomplished through traditional routes. The anticipated academic paper(s) will be targeted for consumer behaviour, marketing or real estate peer-reviewed journals, as deemed appropriate. The unique data and study design opportunities of this research allow for quality work, and therefore quality publication is anticipated. In addition to presenting the findings from this research at the University of Bradford's peer review sessions, this research was presented at the International Marketing Conference, for a special issues conference for the Journal of Business Research at Jiangnan University, Wuxi, China. The intention is to continue to present this work at academic conference(s), specifically the American Real Estate and Urban Economics Association (AREUEA) National Conference.

#### **5.5.1.3 Contributions to Society**

Sustainability and energy efficiency (SEE) is on the forefront of people's minds and agendas, across the globe. This is an issue of particular importance to Canadians, as they rank in the top ten percent of per capita for carbon footprint

size and in the top five percent of per capita energy usage globally (World Bank, 2014).

At the root of this research lies the goal of advancing the commercial viability of SEE housing. This is still seen as a niche market, and it is vital that it grows from that to be part of the regular housing conversation – part of the standard housing market. The reason for this urgency is the protection and preservation of the environment, which is of particular importance since real estate is one of the largest users of natural resources. The research results will aid in this goal by adding to and redirecting the conversation regarding SEE housing – a conversation that involves the government, homebuilders, realtors and sales representatives, and home buyers. Through this research, knowledge gaps of SEE homes have been identified for homebuyers and housing experts (realtors and sales representatives). Government policies, regarding both construction and realtor education, and homebuilder programs may be modified to better educate realtors, sales representatives, and home buyers as to the facts regarding SEE homes. Society and the environment, both in Canada and worldwide, will benefit from the improved conversation created through this research.

#### ***5.5.1.4 Education and Communication***

The known benefits of SEE homes include decreased operating costs, a healthier living space, and a smaller ecological footprint, yet issues still exist with the acceptance of these new environmentally friendly features. Both types of education to the realtor and buyer, as well as education of the benefits described above, are the areas that need the greatest attention for the advancement of SEE housing. The research findings underscored this and found that the lack of education regarding the assets was considered to be important among the participants. These findings were considered when reviewing the theory to practice literature and dissemination model development.

One of the goals of this research was to identify areas for improved communication between the homebuilders and the realtors/sales representatives, and between the consumers and the realtors/sales

representatives. This included not only identifying shortcomings in the current communication channels but also suggested ways to improve that communication to the end of the greater adoption of SEE homes. In the findings, realtors acknowledged academics as credible, trustworthy sources of information and expressed interest in receiving presentations about SEE features from them. The builder, a former information source, was viewed to be less trustworthy (Shiffman et al., 2013). They viewed academics as not having anything to gain by sharing information about SEE features and were interested in having them join future workshops that are put on by builders.

Past research has focused on the communication of socially conscious decision-making knowledge of products that were low in involvement. What is unique about this research is that the focus is on a high involvement ethical product. Socially conscious consumers are highly involved in the process of consuming ethically. When examining ethical consumption decision-making, most of the literature focuses on products that are considered to be low involvement such as coffee, produce, soaps etc. (Szmigin, et al., 2009; Shaw et al., 2005; McEachern et al., 2010). The same literature also focuses on the decision-making process which is considered to be high ethical elaboration routinised (low involvement) products with features such as fair trade, local, organic, or not tested on animals. Few studies have examined the ethical consumption decision-making literature when applied to high ethical elaboration and high involvement products. The review of the consumer decision-making process when purchasing SEE homes and the identified factors that impact purchasing behaviour were considered when developing methods for knowledge dissemination.

### ***5.5.2 Contributions to Practice***

At this point, SEE housing in Canada is still a niche market. The aim of this research was to aid in the dispersion of information so that SEE can be part of the standard residential real estate conversation. The desire was to determine the most effective way to communicate the SEE housing information between and among the consumers, realtors, sales representatives, home builders

(and their subcontractors and suppliers), and the governments, so that SEE housing can grow from a niche market to a commercially viable and necessary part of the conversation.

In order to improve the chances of a successful transition from theory to practice, this research explored the literature that related to the transition of the identified topics. The dissemination of findings into action has been widely debated in the management field. Management theories have been viewed as lacking practicality and a critical gap has been identified between academic rigor and relevance to practice (Bansal et al., 2012). The following will first discuss what is known about this topic, followed by relevant results from the research findings. Literature about translating research into practice will then be presented addressing the challenges that are relevant to this topic. This will be followed by an in-depth discussion of a proposed conceptual model as well as a short discussion based on the outcomes.

There has long been a debate within the management educational system regarding the necessary amount of contribution between theory and practice (Brannick & Coghlan, 2006; McLean et al., 2002; Rynes et al., 1999; Starkey & Madan, 2001; Van de Ven, 2007). Management research has been deemed to have limited influence on management practice (Pfeffer & Fong, 2002) and to be “only remotely related to the real world of practicing managers” (Susman & Evered, 1978, p. 582). Academic scholars have been seen to complicate issues in their attempt to theorise phenomena (Panda & Gupta, 2014). Yet, academic management research also is considered to be underutilised by practitioners and this is seen as an area of serious concern (Brannick, 2000).

This concern was addressed in the United Kingdom in 1989 under the Margaret Thatcher Government. The Research Assessment Exercise (RAE) was developed to evaluate the quality of research undertaken by British higher education institutions (About the RAE 2008, 2017) and was to be conducted every five years. The exercise was developed to address the allocation of limited funding to United Kingdom Universities. Today, British institutions follow The Research Excellence Framework which was the successor to the

Research Assessment Exercise. This framework evaluates impact and is used to assess the United Kingdom research. These evaluations based on impact look for the changes in outcome that can be attributed to the program. Essentially, they are looking to understand the cause-and-effect relationships (About the REF, 2017). Guidelines have now been written for a framework that is being developed for a 2021 publication and they include recommendations to increase research public engagement. Research engagement is seen as a way of enhancing the delivery of benefits from research as well as increasing public awareness of the findings and implications of the research (About the REF, 2017).

When exploring the literature on this topic there is a common discussion on how to narrow the research-practice gap and this has motivated several special editions of journals and also has made mainstream news (Bansal et al., 2012). Researchers are incentivised to publish in journals and prefer producing knowledge over the practical application of their work (Van de Ven & Johnson, 2006). In an attempt to understand this gap, emerging sub categories that aim to narrow it will be discussed; evidence-based management (Pfeffer & Sutton, 2006), engaged scholarship (Van de Ven, 2007), and relational scholarship (Bartunek, 2007).

Evidence-based management stems from the medical establishment when Dr. David Sackett first coined, “evidence-based medicine”. This was defined as, “the conscientious, explicit and judicious use of current best evidence in making decisions about the care of individual patients” (Sackett et al., 1996, p.71). Dr. Sackett was from McMaster University in Hamilton, Ontario, Canada and soon the movement grew from physicians committed to applying research that is clinically relevant, to managers committed to fixing organizational challenges. Evidence-based management uses the best available scientific evidence that is understood in terms of norms to base managerial decisions. Critical theorists have raised objections to the claims made through this approach. They state that there are different ways of looking at social problems, that ‘evidence’ and ‘scientific method’ should not be treated as neutral, and they are concerned that good judgement will be replaced by search engines (Learmonth & Harding, 2006; Duncan-Andrade & Morrell,



2008). Challenges that management face with moving to this evidence-based model include: changing how they treat old ideas as new, changing their mindset to celebrate collective wisdom instead of hierarchical structures, emphasising drawbacks as well as virtues, and adopting neutral stances towards ideologies and theories (Pfeffer & Sutton 2006). This management approach is best implemented through the demand of evidence, examining logic, treating the organisation as an unfinished prototype, and embracing the attitude of wisdom (Pfeffer & Sutton 2006). Benefits from this approach include “changes [in] power dynamics, replacing formal authority, reputation, and intuition with data” (Pfeffer & Sutton, 2006, p. 11).

Engaged Scholarship stems from academia and focuses on the integration of education with community development. It is a type of education, “that can be directly applied to social problems and issues faced by individuals, local communities, organizations, practitioners, and policymakers” (Small & Uttal, 2005 p.937). The aim is to bridge the gap between theory and practice in higher education by shifting how scholars define their relationships with the communities in which they are located. It requires joint discussion and collaboration between researchers and practitioners (Van de Ven, 2006). In academia, tenure and promotion evaluations have lacked this focus and this is seen in the literature as an institutional barrier. In the past, faculty members were not incentivised for engagement but this has been slowly shifting, and as mentioned earlier, the United Kingdom government has worked to encourage this shift through the Research Assessment Exercise and Research Excellence Framework. This government incentive encourages institutions to focus more on engaged scholarship.

Relational Scholarship stems from engaged scholarship but focuses more on the integration between practitioner and scholarship. It highlights that categories within the groups of practitioner and scholarship are independent and the effects that they can have on each other when finding common ground for engagement. Van de Van’s 2007 work on Engaged Scholarship discusses academic communication with practitioners to improve relational scholarship. It highlights the importance of distinguishing between three types of rhetoric:

logos, ethos, and pathos. It stresses the importance of including all three to ensure that relational scholarship can prevail.

“*Logos* is what academic articles typically emphasize; it refers to the clarity and logic of an argument and its supporting evidence. Its impact is sometimes called an argument’s logical appeal. *Ethos* refers to the trustworthiness or credibility of a writer or speaker, and is conveyed through the tone and style of a message as well as the writer’s reputation. Its impact is sometimes called the argument’s “ethical” appeal, or appeal based on credibility. *Pathos* is typically associated with an emotional appeal, though it more fully refers to helping the audience feel as the writer feels. It may best be conveyed through a story that can transform the abstractions of logic into something palpable and convey values, beliefs, understanding, and affect in an imaginative way that moves an audience to action” (Bartunek, 2007 p. 1326).

Knowledge transfer is commonly used within the literature to describe the process of getting knowledge used by stakeholders with the aim of providing inputs to problem solving (Graham et al., 2006). However, since knowledge resides in organizational members and is hard to articulate, the transfer process can be quite complex. Power relationships can also be imbalanced particularly when the exchange is between an employer and an employee and ethical issues have been raised. It is important to differentiate information from knowledge when discussing this topic. Information is thought of as facts or understood data whereas knowledge is seen as a person’s unique ability to apply information (flexible and adaptable skills) (Graham et al., 2006). Knowledge has often been described as only the first step in disseminating knowledge and has been incorrectly understood to be unidirectional from producers to stakeholders. However, extends beyond this to putting knowledge into action (Graham et al., 2006). Knowledge can also be lost in translation. Several different transfer models were reviewed when exploring the literature for the current research. Graham et al., (2006) stated, “There is confusion and misunderstanding about the concepts of knowledge translation, knowledge transfer, knowledge exchange, research utilization,

implementation, diffusion, and dissemination” (Graham et al., 2006, p.13). In order to develop a conceptual model that is based on the most effective model, it is important for researchers to understand the differences between the models found within the literature. The multiple terms that are used to describe all of the parts of the process have been seen as a major barrier to bridging the gap between research and practice (Graham et al., 2006). Graham et al., (2006) summarized these definitions of terms, which can be found in the appendix.

The research to practice literature describes three models of Knowledge Transfer. These models are Producer Push, User Pull and Knowledge Exchange. Producer Push as the name suggests, is when research knowledge and strategies are pushed by the producers towards audiences they identify as needing to know (Lavis et al., 2006). Conversely, User Pull is when strategies and knowledge are ‘pulled’ by the end user. This is accomplished through the seeking out of information and findings by that are seen by users to be useful to their own decision-making (Lavis et al., 2006). Whereas, Knowledge Exchange is more symbiotic building relationships between producers of the research and those who use the findings (Lavis et al., 2006). What is integral to this last model is the capacity building with the implementation group to use research knowledge and also in return to help researchers be more relevant with their work. This Knowledge Exchange model best fits the current research on SEE homes. Dr. John Lavis, who has extensively investigated knowledge transfer states, “exchange relationships can bring about a cultural shift that facilitates the ongoing use of research knowledge among decision-makers and a more decision-relevant culture among researchers.” (Lavis et al., 2006, p. 1). This approach is seen as the most ideal as both parties will benefit from this model. It is also noted in the literature that this model does take more resources as nurturing a relationship takes time and resources in order to properly support the exchange (Lavis et al., 2006). There is a need for a culture shift around SEE housing and an exchange transfer model works best with the current research. Knowledge exchange is, “collaborative problem-solving between researchers and decision makers that happens through linkage and exchange. Effective

knowledge exchange involves interaction between decision makers and researchers and results in mutual learning through the process of planning, producing, disseminating, and applying existing or new research in decision-making” (Canadian Health Services Research Foundation cited from Graham et al., 2006 pg. 15).

Further literature examining knowledge exchange highlights that the method brings together researchers and decision makers in an interactive way where the collaboration begins at the start of the research process when the research question is being determined. The focus is on a collaboration throughout the research process. It is understood that stakeholders involved throughout this process will change as different individuals move positions within the steps of the journey. This is unique and not common in other knowledge transfer models. Having an ongoing cyclical exchange of knowledge between the researcher and the stakeholders ensures that generated knowledge is relevant and applicable for stakeholders as well as useful for researchers (Graham et al., 2006).

Lavis et al., (2003) developed a knowledge transfer strategy and framework to assist organizations in transferring research to practice. The framework consisted of five questions: What should be transferred to decision makers? To whom should research knowledge be transferred? By whom? How? With what effect? They believed that improvements such as developing actionable messages for decision makers, developing knowledge among target audiences and knowledge-transfer skills in research organizations, and evaluating the impact of knowledge-transfer activities could be found within these questions (Lavis et al., 2003). Question 1, what should be transferred to decision makers? The literature suggests that actionable messages from the research knowledge should be transferred, not simply the report or findings that are left to interpretation. The decision makers need to be told explicitly about the solutions. An effective delivery of this will take into consideration the environment to which they are directed (Lavis et al., 2003). Question 2, to whom should research knowledge be transferred? Understanding the type of decisions that the audience makes and the environment in which they work is

important in order to successfully transfer research to practice. Learning about these environments requires the researcher to invest time and energy. When deciding on the audience, it is important to ask who can act on the findings? Who would have the most success and what knowledge pertains mostly to them? (Lavis et al., 2003). Question 3, by whom should research knowledge be transferred? Understanding the perceived credibility of the messenger by the audience is important. Credibility is seen in the literature as being a potential barrier and should be taken into consideration when deciding on the messenger for transferring knowledge. Building credibility can be skill intensive and requires a customized approach to decide who should act as the messenger. Researchers and organizations of government professionals often are the ideal choice as they often have the skills and experience on the subject and are perceived as credible (Lavis et al., 2003). Question 4, how should research knowledge be transferred? Interactive engagement has been found to be the most effective when disseminating knowledge. Research has found that interactions can occur at many stages throughout the research process and that the level of interaction between the messenger and the audience is helpful in explaining what types of research should be used. Some examples of transfers were discussed above and were based from Lavis et al's., later 2006 work that discussed the Push, Pull and/or Knowledge Exchange. The exchange process focuses on the importance of the benefits gained by both the decision makers and the researchers (Lavis et al., 2003). Question 5, with what effect should research knowledge be transferred? The effect relates to the target audience and the objectives of communication exchange. Understanding the effect that is being questioned is important and developing appropriate performance measures can address research impact. The objective may be to inform a debate or create a policy or to change behaviour. Determining what the objective is as well as short term and long term outcomes are important so that measurements can be established accordingly (Lavis et al., 2003). Lavis et al's. (2003) work that assists organizations through the above-mentioned framework provides opportunities for improvement which can be found by answering the 5 discussed questions. They also stress the importance of developing systematic reviews for each combination of question, target audience, and methodological approach. Their

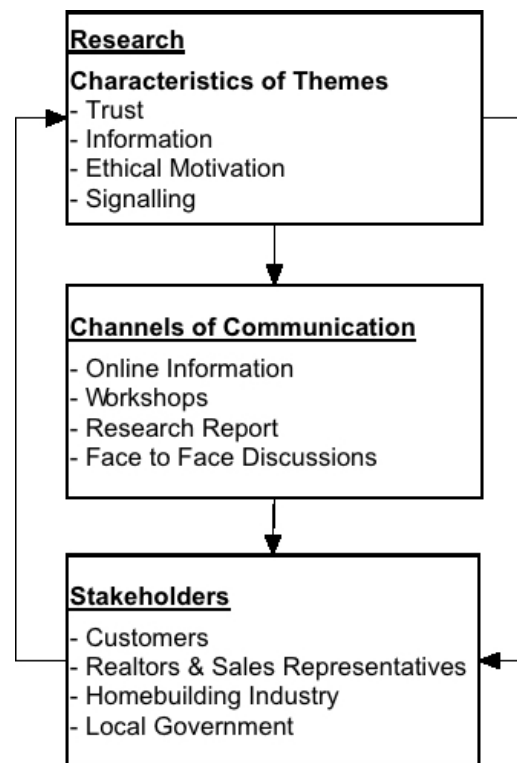
strategy improves how research organizations transfer research knowledge to practice.

#### ***5.5.2.1 Conceptual Model for Translating Research into Practice***

Since the research subject impacts environmental welfare, the timely broadening of this conversation is vitally important to all Canadians, as well as everyone globally. The research results should lead to better informed SEE Canadian home buying behaviour (specifically in Canada, but also worldwide), but that can only be accomplished if the findings are widely disseminated. Completing this research within the ivory tower and releasing it solely to academia will not meet the overarching goals (although academic outlets will be pursued as well). Instead, a network has been developed through which to disseminate the information, and opportunities have been arranged to present the findings. The more the SEE real estate conversation is advanced, the more in-demand expertise will be within the area and the more likely firms will be willing to share their proprietary data. Such quality data-sharing will allow for more in-depth analysis of the implications of SEE on real estate, further advancing the SEE conversation, and the management of real estate's impact on the environment.

One of the goals of this research was to improve the existing but small SEE real estate conversation. For that to happen, the findings must be disseminated broadly and effectively. The following figure shows the steps of transferring knowledge gained from the research to practice through knowledge exchange.

Figure 32. Knowledge Transfer Model: Exchange



#### 5.5.2.2 Research

The research findings will be communicated with the stakeholders. This is a cyclical process as the arrows go in both directions. Thus, feedback from the stakeholders will shape future research as well as the decisions on the types of channels of communication used to disseminate findings. The themes that were considered to be important and will need to be communicated to stakeholders when examining high involvement ethical decision-making were: Trust, Information, Ethical Motivation and Signalling.

One of the principal goals of this research was to increase knowledge regarding SEE homes for the general public. It is only by making SEE a standard topic in the general public's home buying conversations that it will permeate the market. In order to reach that goal, the research will target several audiences, including the government (at a variety of levels, including federal, provincial and municipal), the homebuilding industry, the home sales industry (including realtors and sales representatives), and the media. A

specific approach to reach each of these audiences is outlined and through a coordinated effort to reach each of these groups, and to encourage these groups to engage in the conversation with each other, knowledge of the benefits of SEE homes will permeate the home buying market and be conveyed most effectively to the general public. Additionally, in support of the second goal (advancing the academic body of work on SEE), scholarly associations in both the Marketing and Real Estate fields will be targeted through publications, conference and seminar presentations.

#### **5.5.2.3 Channels of Communication**

Channels of communication were identified within the research findings. Online information for communicating SEE features to buyers was found to be important as consumers are conducting a substantial information search prior to meeting with a realtor or sales representative. Having tangible items within the show rooms was also found to be important as findings suggested that it was essential for buyer to physically see features in order to understand and be convinced of new technology. More information regarding financial gains of SEE features was also identified as being important. By exchanging information with the stakeholders, these findings will be discussed and stakeholder feedback will be considered when developing effective channels of communication and deciding on perceived credible sources by the audience. When exchanging information with stakeholders, they informed the researcher of additional effective channels of communication such as holding interactive workshops and customized research reports.

#### **5.5.2.4 Stakeholders**

The research works toward the protection and preservation of the environment by disbursing and advancing information regarding SEE housing to four audiences; Local Government, Homebuilding Industry, Realtors and Sales Representatives and Customers. Supporting material and the dissemination of the research findings will uniquely occur through each stakeholder.

#### **5.5.2.5 Local Government**

The government (at a variety of levels including municipal, provincial, and federal) may use this research to shape policy decisions. By knowing how



consumers respond to a product (home), policy may be more effectively crafted to encourage the desired outcome and limit unintended consequences. The research report will be summarized and presented to the mayor of the City of Guelph, Cam Guthrie the municipal/local level as well as to the Member of Parliament, Lloyd Longfield who represents the City of Guelph at the federal level. Both governmental figures discussed the potential of disseminating the findings two years ago at the ground-breaking event of the first Net Zero Home build in Guelph.

#### **5.5.2.6 Mortgage Lenders**

Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC), is a Crown corporation of the Government of Canada (CMHC, 2017). This corporation, “offers objective housing research and advice to Canadian governments, consumers and the housing industry” (CMHC, 2017). Disseminating knowledge to the CMHC is pivotal so that SEE housing can grow from a niche market to a commercially viable and necessary part of the conversation. The government will have access to the results through the academic and white papers, as rigor demands. Connections have been made with representatives of the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) regarding this SEE research. They recommended that the findings be shared with the CMHC Vice President for Policy and Research, so that future research regarding SEE housing in Canada will be made directly available to the CMHC. The government and the homebuilding industry will access the results through media dispersion. All major homebuilders in Canada are members of the Canadian Home Builders’ Association (CHBA), and will therefore hear of the results at the CHBA Annual Meeting, allowing for wide dispersal of the findings to sales representatives.

#### **5.5.2.7 Homebuilding Industry**

The homebuilding industry may use the research to inform their future offering decisions. By better understanding what a consumer desires, values, understands, and is willing to purchase, the industry can offer a SEE home which the consumer demands. Disseminating information to the Canadian Home Builders Association (CHBA) has been identified by the researcher as important as they are an influential industry leader. In addition to national level CHBA, the direct contact that will benefit from the research findings is the local

Net Zero Builder and research partner, Reid's Heritage Homes. This builder has been an active partner throughout the research process. The initial observation took place at their sales workshops and the call for study participants for both the exploratory and main studies were posted on their corporate websites. Press releases at various stages of the research development have already been planned in conjunction with Reid's Heritage Homes. Through training, realtors and sales representatives will learn of the research results, and by incorporating that information into sales presentations, home buyers will also learn of the findings. This is key, as the way to increase SEE home sales is by altering the knowledge and behaviour of the home buyers. Training plans include suggested programs in SEE housing for realtors' continuing education and in-house training of sales representatives by homebuilders.

#### **5.5.2.8 Realtors and Sales Representatives**

Realtors and sales representatives will benefit from the suggested guidelines to more effectively communicate SEE home benefits to consumers. This may lead to increased SEE homes sales, and expertise in a home sub-category which will only grow in importance in the future. At the initial stages of the research, discussions took place with Reid's Heritage Homes sales representatives and local realtors at a sales workshop hosted by Reid's Heritage Homes. At that time, the dissemination of future findings via a presentation at future sales workshops to reach realtors and sales representatives was discussed. The builder also expressed their interest in updating information on their corporate website as well as updating marketing messaging based on the research findings.

#### **5.5.2.9 Customers**

Home buyers will indirectly benefit from changes made by governments, homebuilders, realtors, and sales representatives. More effectively-targeted policy, the inclusion of SEE home features that matter the most to consumers, and the increased SEE knowledge of realtors and sales representatives (which provide the home buying expertise to consumers) all increase the probability that a homebuyer will strongly consider and possibly invest in a SEE home. Based on prior responses to the SEE empirical studies, requests

to present to a variety of corporate and industry-supporting non-profit audiences are anticipated, as well as requests to discuss the research for print interviews and blogs.

In order to reach the goal of protecting and preserving the environment, this research will help alter the behaviour of the first three groups in order to incentivise consumers to change their purchase patterns to include SEE homes.

## **5.6 Scope and Limitations**

Given the ethical dimensions of this research topic, a social desirability bias may have existed within the interview answers as participants may have attempted to align their responses with those they deem as preferred and most desirable to the researcher. Efforts to minimise this effect were made by structuring the research process in a semi-covert manner in order to observe if and how the consumer introduced ethical aspects without prompting. The questionnaire was also designed to address this desirability concern. The ethical nature of the topic was not explicitly addressed until the latter half of the interview. It was also noted that questions directed towards realtors could be seen as sensitive as they may be perceived as 'testing' their knowledge on a new subject area. Whenever possible, relationships were built to create trust and reduce the likelihood of social desirability bias although the potential effect cannot be completely discounted.

The farmers' market surveys and interviews were conducted at the end of the summer season. In Canada, there exist strong seasonal changes in food availability and this is reflected in consumers' shopping behaviour, especially at farmers' markets. These findings might have differed if the study was conducted during different seasons. Another discrepancy appeared from the survey conducted at the farmers' market. From the survey, the majority of participants agreed that organic elements were the most important produce feature. However, in the interviews, this was not the case and local elements were found to be more important. Perhaps this was due to the order of questions on produce features presented within the survey. The diverse

research process which captured the data by several approaches including observation, survey questionnaire, and through interviews addressed this concern of order effects.

Although bracketing was used to reduce researcher bias, limitations may still exist. Personal values and interpretations that could potentially shape the narrative were discussed and written up as well as those of the participants throughout the research process. The researcher stood back and looked at the whole research process including their own being as part of the whole. Being reflexive and conducting bracketing was vital to this study to understand the views of the participants without the concern that their views may have been manipulated and made to fit those of the researcher. The effort to ensure that potential personal biases and views were kept top of mind during the research process, as well as considerations made to shape the research approach, were considered to be integral in reducing biases. However, due to the researcher's beliefs that society must not only adjust what they buy but also alter their relationship with consumption to combat climate change, a strong personal bias did exist. Even though measures were taken, this strong bias could have impacted the interpretations of the findings.

The research was conducted in Southern Ontario, Canada and due to the emerging subject matter, the findings reflect the specific demographics of this region and should not be generalised nationally or globally. The researcher did not rely on a convenience sample, instead, conducted research in the field. However, participants interviewed for both the low involvement and high involvement studies were limited to their current knowledge and experience on the subject. Sustainable and energy efficient features is a burgeoning field and participants may have been limited to their knowledge of the subject matter. Also, the region where the research was conducted has faced an increase in residential hydro costs of 71 percent between 2008 and 2016 while the average increase was only 34 percent across Canada (Evaluation Electricity Price Growth in Ontario, 2017). Due to this significant increase in energy costs within the region where the study was conducted, consumers

might be more open to sustainability and energy efficiency features and therefore this research should not be generalized across Canada.

### **5.7 Direction of Future Research**

There are several areas of further research that emerge from the current investigation. More research needs to be done in the lesser studied high involvement ethical consumption domain. It would be interesting to investigate whether, and to what extent, high involvement ethical products have an impact on other behavioural constructs. Future studies should rely on high involvement literature as well as ethical consumption literature when examining high involvement ethical decision-making or when developing a positioning strategy for products within this domain.

Additional research could focus on the testing of the conceptual model, constructs of high ethical elaboration and high product involvement that has been presented in this thesis. Further research should assess the validity of this model and try to find evidence on the relative importance of the four dimensions. Future studies might show that these dimensions have different patterns of influence in the ethical decision-making process. Questions within this research expanded on the identified themes from the exploratory study and became more open-ended, discovering new themes and construct relationships. Future research could further expand on these through a quantitative analysis.

High involvement ethical consumption has not been widely researched. Therefore, early information found within the exploratory stage relied on anecdotal evidence and the findings from industry leaders and government sources to build a knowledge base. This was important, as from this base the researcher was able to relate the practical findings to theoretical underpinnings from which this study was developed. The signalling theme that emerged in the high involvement ethical consumption domain studies is prevalent within the luxury consumption literature. Future work should further explore the relationship of the luxury consumption literature and SEE house consumption.

Specific to the sustainable and energy efficient housing market, more research should study cost recovery and other financial incentives addressing the increased financial risks found within the high involvement ethical product domain. Future research examining this, will aid marketers in reducing the attitude-behaviour gap within this domain. Similarly, research should examine how to develop an efficiency rating signal that could be implemented within the housing market. This study suggested the 'Blower Door' test as a mandatory test that would provide a numerical signal of efficiency for all housing listings on the market and current homeowners. Future research should examine this further and exhaust all other options regarding the best signalling method. This will address the cost recovery barriers among all stakeholder levels.

Questions did not address corporate social responsibility (CSR), nor the status background of the developer which research indicates is taken into consideration during the ethical decision-making process. Future research on SEE homes will need to address this construct.

Participants revealed that they were interested in learning more about the current research findings. In the high involvement decision-making domain, the need for realtor education was prevalent, and some even expressed the type of education that they would like to have. Future research should work towards disseminating these findings to this category ensuring that the knowledge transfer occurs.

## **Chapter 6**

### **6.1 Conclusion**

This chapter concludes the thesis offering a summary of the main points discussed in the previous sections and reflecting on the overall contribution presented by the research. These concluding remarks aim to position the research within the relevant theoretical and managerial debates to which it is contributing.

First, the research problem being investigated in this thesis is reinstated. Subsequently the methodology for the whole study is summarised in relation to the relevant philosophical assumptions. The next step is reviewing the contributions of the study both from a theoretical and managerial perspective. Concluding remarks end the chapter and provide a closure to the thesis.

### **6.2 Research Problem**

This study explored the attitude-behaviour gap through the comparison of levels of product involvement in ethical decision-making. It argued that ethical elaboration was an aspect of product involvement and examined the relationship between involvement and ethical consumption providing a more holistic understanding to ethical decision-making. It identified antecedents of both low and high involvement ethical product decision-making at a farmers' market, and with sustainable and energy efficient features in the housing market, respectively. The research tackles an area of both theoretical and managerial importance.

### **6.3 Methodological Considerations**

The research adopts a qualitative method design on an inductive approach to social science. Since reality is socially constructed and people make sense of the world based on their social interactions, this study examined participants' views and their socially constructed realities on ethical consumption. The constructivist worldview manifests in phenomenological studies, in which individuals describe their experiences. This study then looked for patterns of meaning based on the data that was collected. When studying under this

method, participants were approached with broad general questions so that they could construct the meaning of the situation through discussion and interaction. For this reason, a convenience sample was not used and instead the study took place in the field.

Most of the work on ethical consumption deals with low-involvement products. This study addresses high-involvement ethical consumption within the housing market through a qualitative approach. These aims were achieved through semi-structured and in-depth interviews with consumers and sellers of ethical products across low and high involvement domains. The empirical investigation revealed new insights into the constructs considered when purchasing high involvement products.

#### **6.4 Theoretical and Managerial Contributions of the Research**

This thesis presents a new account of ethical decision-making of high and low involvement products. The research contributes to the existing debates in the following ways: showing that consumers experience ethical decision-making differently based on the level of product involvement, developing a research process framework called the Ethical Elaboration Product Involvement Framework which provides a new way of approaching ethical decision making, showing how product knowledge and how people use products to signal to others differs across levels of ethical product involvement, providing steps for transferring knowledge gained from the research to practice through a conceptual model, and showing that household income shapes which constructs influence ethical decision making.

Every theoretical contribution has a managerial counterpart and the following more specifically examines this relationship between theory and practice. Findings that examined the relationships between constructs and barriers to consumption, impact marketing decisions as information is regarded as a cost recovery due to the increased financial risk. The findings that demonstrate that constructs are approached differently between involvement levels should result with the SEE housing market relying on emerging high involvement ethical consumption literature and not generalising from the low involvement ethical consumption domain. The findings demonstrate that consumers'



environmental motivation towards ethical consumption is more outwardly focused in the high involvement domain and more inwardly focused in the low involvement domain. This impacts managerial decisions and when advertising towards environmental motivations the message will be persuasive when focusing on the positive contributions high involvement products make towards climate change, the environment and other macro/global impacts. For low involvement products, marketers will be more persuasive when positioning their product highlighting the positive impact that these environmental features have on the consumers' health. The findings regarding the consumption barriers have a managerial implication for the importance of developing trust within the seller and buyer relationship. This was seen to be very important on both levels of ethical product involvement as trust significantly reduces misconceptions that act as consumption barriers within these domains.

The significance of understanding consumer behaviour regarding home purchase cannot be overstated from a commercial standpoint. Additionally, there is the significance of such decisions on the environment, particularly in Canada where natural resource usage is high, and real estate is the dominant usage source. The potential influence of the findings may be far reaching – not only adding an important cornerstone to the new SEE real estate consumer behaviour literature, but also directly shaping policy, industry product design and sales techniques, and the knowledge of the general public regarding the role of homes in the preservation of the environment. This research aids in the dispersion of information among stakeholders so that sustainability and energy efficiency can be part of the standard real estate conversation.

## **6.5 Concluding Remarks**

This thesis presents an investigation into the role that involvement possesses relating to ethical decision making. It offers significant contributions to existing debates by describing the decision-making process that leads to ethical consumption choices. A better understanding of how involvement is experienced and how it impacts ethical motivations can have an important role in developing better marketing campaigns for the promotion of sustainable consumer behaviour, for low involvement products such as local produce and

also high involvement products such as sustainable and energy efficient homes. This study contributes to the development of knowledge in this area by offering insights to scholars and practitioners that clarify how consumers experience ethical decision-making and what impact involvement has on future choices. Overall, the current research identified ethical decision-making of high involvement products as a category that must first be explored through qualitative methods so that the realities within that domain are captured before deductive measurement takes place.

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## **Appendices**

### **8.1 Appendix A: Study 1 Research Documents**

#### **8.1.1 Survey Consent Form**

Dear Madam/Sir,

I would like to ask you for your support in completing this questionnaire, which is an integral part of my research on 'Sustainable Consumption'. My research focuses on identifying the driving factors that motivate conscious consumers to buy produce at the Farmers' Market.

You might be wondering why you have been chosen to respond to this questionnaire. This is because I am seeking responses from people who are 'conscious consumers'. Conscious consumers seek ethical, social, and or economic alternatives when purchasing products. With your knowledge and understanding you can contribute to the investigation of sustainable consumption. I rely heavily on your contribution! Your response to the questions will be treated in absolute confidence.

Thank you very much for your support!

Best Regards,

Lianne Foti  
Doctoral Research, University of Bradford, School of Management

Supervised by, Dr. Gillian Wright

### **8.1.2 Questionnaire**

Thank you very much for completing the following questions!

The questionnaire is divided into two main parts. In the first part of the questionnaire, you will be asked some questions about shopping behaviour. In the second section of the questionnaire, you will be asked to give some information about yourself. Just like the whole questionnaire, these personal questions will be treated with the strictest confidence.

The completion of this questionnaire should take no longer than 10 minutes, as the questions are mostly multiple choices to which you respond by simply ticking the respective box next to your chosen answer. Please only tick one box.

---

#### **Sustainable Consumption Survey –SECTION 1 of 2: Shopping Behaviour Questions**

1. This season, how often did you go to a farmers' market?  
☐ Once a week      ☐ Once in two weeks      ☐ Twice a week  
☐ Once a month      ☐ One time only
2. How much do you spend?  
☐ Less than \$10  
☐ \$10 - \$20  
☐ \$20 - \$50  
☐ \$50 - \$100  
☐ More than \$100
3. How do you compare the price/item from elsewhere?  
☐ Lower cost  
☐ Same cost  
☐ More expensive
4. How do you compare the quality/item from elsewhere?  
☐ Lower quality  
☐ Same quality  
☐ Better quality

5. How would you rate the following Guelph Farmers' Market characteristics?  
Please write the appropriate number in the blanks for each characteristic. Please use the following rating:

**5=Excellent**

**4=Very Good**

**3=Good**

**2=Fair**

**1=Poor**

- \_\_\_ Sufficient amount of organic produce
- \_\_\_ Sufficient amount of locally grown produce
- \_\_\_ Vendor attitude
- \_\_\_ Prices
- \_\_\_ Hours of operation
- \_\_\_ Location convenience

6. What are the reasons you shop at the Guelph Farmers' Market? Please use the following rating:

**5=Very Important**

**4=Somewhat Important**

**3=Neutral**

**2=Less Important**

**1=Least Important**

- \_\_\_ To buy items that are unique to the market
- \_\_\_ To buy locally grown produce
- \_\_\_ To buy organically grown produce
- \_\_\_ To feel engaged with the community
- \_\_\_ To fulfill part of my summer routine
- \_\_\_ Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

7. How often do you choose organic fruits and vegetables for consumption?

- ☐ Never    ☐ Seldom    ☐ Usually    ☐ Always

8. How often do you choose locally grown fruits and vegetables for consumption?

- ☐ Never    ☐ Seldom    ☐ Usually    ☐ Always

9. Does the availability of locally grown produce affect where you do most of your food shopping?

- ☐ Yes    ☐ No
-

10. Where and in what amounts did you purchase or obtain your fruits and vegetables during the 2013 farmers' market season?

	<b>All</b>	<b>Most</b>	<b>Some</b>	<b>None</b>
Farmers' markets	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Pick your own	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Roadside stands	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Supermarkets	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Friend's garden	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Community veggie box	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Own garden	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (specify) _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

11. How did you expect the produce at the farmers' markets to be different from that of other retail facilities?

a. In terms of quality

☐ Better      ☐ Worse      ☐ Same

b. In terms of variety

☐ Better      ☐ Worse      ☐ Same

c. In terms of prices

☐ Better      ☐ Worse      ☐ Same

### **How Do You Feel About The Following Statements?**

12. Freshness and direct contact with farmers are factors that drive people to farmers' markets.

☐ Agree      ☐ Neutral      ☐ Disagree

13. Locally grown food is more important than organically grown food?

☐ Agree      ☐ Neutral      ☐ Disagree

14. Organically grown food is more important than locally grown food?

☐ Agree      ☐ Neutral      ☐ Disagree

SECTION 2 of 2: Personal Questions

**YOUR ANSWERS TO THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS WILL HELP US  
INTERPRET THE RESULTS OF THIS SURVEY AND WILL BE KEPT  
STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL**

15. Please indicate your age

- ☐ Less than 20      ☐ 21-35      ☐ 36-50  
☐ 51-65      ☐ Over 65

16. Please indicate your gender

- ☐ Male      ☐ Female

17. Regarding your household,

- a. Number of adults \_\_\_\_\_  
b. Number of children under 18 \_\_\_\_\_

18. Are you the primary shopper of food in your household?

- ☐ Yes      ☐ No

19. Please indicate the highest level of education you have achieved.

- ☐ Grade school      ☐ High School      ☐ Some College  
☐ Undergraduate      ☐ Graduate      ☐ Doctoral

20. Into what range does your household annual income fall?

- ☐ Less than \$20,000      ☐ \$60,000- \$79,999  
☐ \$20,000- \$39,999      ☐ \$80,000- \$99,999  
☐ \$40,000- \$59,999      ☐ \$100,000 OR MORE

**YOUR PARTICIPATION IN THIS RESEARCH PROJECT IS HIGHLY  
APPRECIATED**

---

### **8.1.3 Interview Consent Form**

Dear Madam/Sir,

I would like to thank you for your support by participating in a 20-minute interview, which is an integral part of my research on "sustainable Consumption". My research focuses on identifying the driving factors that motivate conscious consumers to buy produce at the Farmers' Market.

You might be wondering why you have been chosen to participate in this interview. This is because I am seeking responses from people who are 'conscious consumers'. Conscious consumers seek ethical, social, and or economic alternatives when purchasing products. With your knowledge and understanding you can contribute to the investigation of sustainable consumption. I rely heavily on your contribution! Your response to the questions will be treated in absolute confidence.

Thank you very much for your support!

Best Regards,

Lianne Foti

Doctoral Research, University of Bradford, School of Management,  
Supervised by Dr. Gillian Wright

#### **8.1.4 Interview Questions**

**The following questions focus on identifying the driving factors that motivate conscious consumers to buy produce at the Farmers' Market.**

1. Why do you shop at the Farmers' Market?
2. What other places do you shop at to get your groceries?
3. How do you compare the quality of the items from elsewhere?
4. What are the main items that you purchase at the Farmers' Market?
5. What items do you NOT purchase at the Farmers' Market, but do purchase elsewhere?
6. What are the reasons for shopping elsewhere?
7. How do you compare the price of the items from elsewhere?  
-For example, a mainstream grocery store
8. Do you believe that there is a sufficient amount of organic produce at the Hamilton Farmers' Market?
9. Do you believe find that there is sufficient amount of locally grown produce at the Hamilton Farmers' Market?
10. Why do you purchase Organic or Local foods?
11. What is the importance of the **vendor relationship**?
12. Do you trust more the produce that is purchased **directly** from the farmer/vendor? How so?
13. Are you concerned about consuming certain types of food? Food purchased from at different locations/countries?
14. If yes, what are your **concerns**? Do they have an **impact on society**?
15. Do you trust the produce that is imported from **other countries**?
16. How do you feel after shopping at the Farmers' market?
17. If positive, does this influence your purchasing behaviour after leaving the market?
18. Do you feel a strong connection to the **community** when shopping at the Farmers' Market?

19. If yes, how so?

20. This season, how often did you go to a farmers' market?

21. How much do you spend?

The participant is between the age of:

- ☐ Less than 20 ☐ 21-35 ☐ 36-50  
☐ 51-65 ☐ Over 65

The gender of the participant is:

- ☐ Male ☐ Female



### **8.1.5 Interview Questions**

#### Base Interview Questions

1. For how long have you been selling produce at the farmers' market?
2. Why do consumers shop at the farmers' market?
3. Do you sell strictly organic produce? If so, why?
4. Do you sell a variety of organic and non-organic produce? If so, why?
5. Do you sell strictly local produce? If so, why?
6. Do you sell a variety of both locally grown and non-locally grown produce? If so, why?
7. How does the produce found at the farmers' market differ from produce at large grocery stores?
8. Thank you. Do you have any questions or comments?

## 8.2 Appendix B: Study 2 Research Documents

### 8.2.1 Participant Recruitment Letter

**Following is the script which Reid's Heritage Homes emailed to sales representatives and real estate agents in seeking participant volunteers for our proposed research:**

The University of Guelph is undertaking research to investigate the consumer decision-making process associated with purchasing a home, and to identify the factors that impact purchasing behavior. This research will be approached predominately through qualitative methodology, utilizing interviews with Sales Representatives and Real Estate Agents.

The University requires volunteers to participate in an interview to assist in their research. The interview will take two hours and the meeting date and location will be arranged at a time and place that is most convenient for you. As a thank you for your support of their research efforts, each participant will receive a \$20 gift card to a coffee shop or grocery store. Only the University of Guelph researchers will know if you do or do not participate in this research, and every effort will be made to ensure confidentiality of identifying information that is obtained in connection with this study. For more information, please see the attached Consent to Participate in Research document for the study titled Understanding and Improving Decisions Regarding Sustainable and Energy Efficient (SEE) Homes.

If you are interested in participating or have any questions regarding this request, please feel free to contact Lianne Foti, doctoral candidate from University of Bradford, School of Management, who will be conducting the interviews. She can be reached at (519) 824-4120 ext. 56286 or [foti@uoguelph.ca](mailto:foti@uoguelph.ca).

Thank you for your support.

Sincerely yours,

Jennifer Weatherston

Director of Estimating | Net Zero Project Manager | **Reid's Heritage Homes**  
6783 Wellington Road 34, RR 22, Cambridge ON N3C 2V4  
T: [519.658.6656](tel:519.658.6656) ext. 256 | | [jweatherston@heritagehomes.com](mailto:jweatherston@heritagehomes.com)



Modern Thinking. Timeless Values.

2013 | Ontario Home Builder of the Year  
2014 | Best Small and Medium Sized Employers

### **8.2.2 Script**



#### **Understanding and Improving Decisions Regarding Sustainable and Energy Efficient (SEE) Homes**

Lianne Foti, Doctoral Candidate from the University of Bradford, School of Management will be the sole researcher conducting the interviews and will be adhering to the following steps:

##### **1. Respond to interested volunteers**

- Thank those who responded and send a copy of the consent form.
- Arrange a meeting place to conduct the interview. The most convenient location for the participant will be chosen.

##### **2. Interview process**

- Thank the participant and present them with the gift card.
- Walk through the consent form with the participant. Provide them with a hardcopy of the consent form.
- If approved, the interview questions will be recorded.

##### **3. Post interview**

1. Email research findings to participants once the project has been completed.

### **8.2.3 Consent Form**

#### **Research Project Title:**

Understanding and Improving Decisions Regarding Sustainable and Energy Efficient (SEE) Homes.

#### **Investigators:**

You are asked to participate in a research study conducted by Lianne Foti, doctoral candidate from the University of Bradford, School of Management in the United Kingdom.

#### **Purpose of the Study:**

At this point, sustainable and energy efficient (SEE) housing in Canada is still a niche market. The goal of this research is to aid in the dispersion of information so that SEE can be part of the standard residential real estate conversation. The desire is to determine the most effective way to communicate the SEE housing information between and amongst the consumers, realtors, home builders (and their subcontractors and suppliers), and the governments, so that SEE housing can grow from a niche market to a commercially viable and necessary part of the conversation.

The aim of the current research is to investigate the consumer decision-making process when purchasing SEE homes and to identify factors that impact purchasing behaviour. This goal will be approached predominantly through qualitative methodology, utilizing interviews with Realtors and Sales Representatives that sell homes with a variety of features including sustainability and energy efficiency in Kitchener-Waterloo-Cambridge-Guelph (KWCG) in Southern Ontario, Canada. The research questions will be addressed through empirical research designed to further identify themes that constitute barriers to ethical consumption of high involvement SEE homes.

#### **Procedures:**

If you volunteer to participate in this study, we would ask you to do the following:

Contact us to arrange an interview time. Interviews can take place up to five weeks after you receive the invitation/email sent on behalf of Reid's Heritage Homes. You can only participate in one interview. Lianne Foti will pre-arrange with you a meeting place to conduct the interview. For your convenience, most interviews are anticipated to occur

at your workplace, but the University of Guelph will also be made available for a meeting location if you prefer that option. Interviews are estimated to take approximately 30 minutes each. Prior to the interview, the consent form will have been emailed to you for review. At the beginning of the meeting, Lianne Foti will walk through the consent form with you. The interview will then occur and it will be audio-recorded.

The research findings will be made available to you and you will receive a copy of our results. Additionally, if training is developed based on the research results, you will be invited to attend.

If training occurs and you decided to attend, a second round of interviews will be arranged (approximately 1 year after the initial interview). The procedure for the second interview will be the exact same as the first (described above). You will be given the option of declining to continue your contribution in the research if you so wish. The second interview will be very similar in format to the first, as the intention is to measure changes in your response.

**Potential Risks and Discomforts:**

Participation in this research will not pose any risk to your relationship with Reid's Heritage Homes. You will be asked about your familiarity with sustainable and energy efficient (SEE) home features. It is possible you could feel embarrassed for not knowing about these aspects. However, high levels of familiarity are not common and the only person observing your responses is the interviewer. If you feel it necessary, the interview can be terminated.

**Potential Benefits to Participants and/or to Society:**

Participants could learn of the importance of SEE home features, which could improve their job performance. This could occur both through the interview process, and also through future training, which may be made available to them.

Society will benefit as the research works toward the protection and preservation of the environment by disbursing and advancing information regarding SEE housing to four audiences. First, the government (at a variety of levels including municipal, provincial, and federal) may use this research to shape policy decisions. By knowing how consumers respond to a product (home), policy may be more effectively crafted to encourage the desired outcome and limit unintended consequences. Secondly, the homebuilding industry may use the research to inform them for their future offering decisions. By better understanding what a consumer desires, values, understands, and is willing to purchase, the industry can offer a SEE home which the consumer demands. Thirdly, Realtors and Sales Representatives will benefit from the suggested guidelines to more effectively communicate SEE home benefits to consumers. This may lead to increased SEE homes sales, and an expertise in a home sub-category, which will only grow in importance in the future. Lastly, homebuyers will indirectly benefit from changes made by governments, homebuilders, Realtors, and Sales Representatives. More effectively-targeted policy, the inclusion of SEE home features that matter the most to consumers, and the increased SEE knowledge of Realtors and Sales Representatives (which provide the home buying expertise to consumers) all increase the probability that a home buyer will strongly consider and possibly invest in a SEE home. In order to reach the goal of protecting and preserving the environment, this research will help alter the behaviour of the first three groups in order to incentivize consumers to change their purchasing patterns to include SEE homes.

**Payment for Participation:**

You will receive a \$10 gift card to a grocery store or coffee shop as an incentive to encourage participation. You can withdraw from the interview at any point and you will still receive your gift card.

**Confidentiality:**

Every effort will be made to ensure confidentiality of any identifying information that is obtained in connection with this study. Your interview will be recorded on a password-protected device and downloaded within 24 hours to a password-protected computer in a locked office. You have the right to review/edit the tapes or transcripts.

An encrypted USB Key will be used to ship the recording to a trusted transcription company and a confidentiality agreement will be signed. After your interview has been transcribed, it will be analysed in coded form.

Directly identifying information will be coded and the files along with the original audio files will be stored for at least 2 years past the publication of the final associated paper on an encrypted computer in a locked office. After this time, the files will be erased. Reid's Heritage Homes will not have access to any of the identifying information, nor will they be aware of whether or not you chose to participate. Only Lianne Foti, Doctoral candidate, from the University of Bradford, School of Management will have access to the information.

**Participation and Withdrawal:**

You can choose whether to be in this study or not. If you volunteer to be in this study, you may withdraw at any time without consequences of any kind. You may exercise the option of removing your data from the study. You may also refuse to answer any questions you don't want to answer and still remain in the study. Although highly unlikely, the investigator may withdraw you from this research if extenuated circumstances arise that warrant doing so.

**Rights of Research Participants:**

You may withdraw your consent at any time and discontinue participation without penalty. You are not waiving any legal claims, rights or remedies because of your participation in this research study. This study has been reviewed and received ethics clearance through the University of Guelph Research Ethics Board. If you have any questions regarding your rights as a research participant, contact:

Research Ethics Officer Telephone: (510) 824-4120, ext. 56606  
University of Guelph E-mail: sauld@uoguelph.ca  
437 University Centre Fax: (519) 821-5236  
Guelph, ON N1G 2W1

**Questions:**

If you have any questions regarding this research project or this consent form, please contact Lianne Foti at 519-824-4120 ext. 56286 or by email at: foti@uoguelph.ca

**Signature of Research Participant:**

I have read the information provided for the study "Understanding and Improving Decisions Regarding Sustainable and Energy Efficient (SEE) Homes" as described herein. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I agree to participate in this study. I have been given a copy of this form.

---

Name of Participant (please print)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Participant

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**Signature of Witness:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Witness (please print)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Witness

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## 8.2.4 Interview Questions

### Interview Questions:

#### BASELINE

1. When you introduce a new construction home to your customers, what is the information you present? Could you please list items in order? (Which information you tend to give first, second, and so on.)
2. Who are your homebuyers? If you could segment the buyer market, how would you do that?
  - a. Can you identify which buyer segments respond to each feature? For example: Recently Married/ Young Families/ Empty Nesters. What percent of your customers is in each segment?
3. When you give the opportunity to the customers for them to ask you questions, what are the questions they usually ask? And in what order?
  - a. If there is no recall response for XX amount of time, provide some cues such as: do they ask about roof age, quality and age of HVAC equipment, if the finish is real or fake (hardwood vs. laminate).
4. When you introduce a unique feature of a house to your customers (i.e., any feature that is not typically included in regular houses such as skylights, or a rental unit), to what type of features do buyers mostly strongly respond?
  - a. Can you identify which buyer segments respond to each feature? For example: Recently Married/ Young Families/ Empty Nesters.
5. According to your observation, what's the decision process of your customers?
  - a. For example, what features do customers consider first? What features do customers debate?
  - b.

#### BASELINE + GREEN

6. Have you heard of LEED, Energy Star, and/or Net Zero? Please describe what you know about each of these programs.
7. Do you know Reid Heritage Homes' positioning on sustainable and energy efficient housing? How would you describe their position?
8. Have you ever had any consumers ask you questions about sustainable features of a house?
  - a. If so, what's the percentage of your customers care about this issue?
  - b. Who are these consumers?
  - c.

We will now revisit the first set of questions that were asked, but this time please restrict your answers to instances involving sustainable or energy efficient homes. The responses don't need to be with regard to only sustainable or energy efficient features.



9. When you introduce a new construction sustainable or energy efficient home to your customers, what is the information you present? Could you please list items in order? (Which information you tend to give first, second, and so on.)
10. Who are your homebuyers that are interested in sustainable or energy efficient homes? If you could segment the buyer market, how would you do that?
  - a. Can you identify which buyer segments respond to each feature? For example: Recently Married/ Young Families/ Empty Nesters.
11. When you give the opportunity to the customers considering a sustainable or energy efficient home to ask you questions, what are the questions they usually ask? And in what order?
12. When you introduce a unique feature in a sustainable or energy efficient house (not necessarily a sustainable or energy efficient feature) to your customers (i.e., any feature that is not typically included in regular houses), what type of features that you highlight do buyers mostly respond to?
  - a. Can you identify which buyer segments respond to each feature? For example: Recently Married/ Young Families/ Empty Nesters.
13. According to your observation, what's the decision process of your customers when considering a sustainable or energy efficient house?
14. Net Zero Energy Homes focus on 1. Saving money on energy costs, 2. Providing healthier more reliable living spaces, and 3. Lowering greenhouse gas emissions. Please arrange these aspects in order of importance to your buyers.
  - a. If this order differs by buyer segment, please specify by segment (for example: Recently Married/Young Families/ Empty Nesters)

#### SOCIAL INFLUENCE

15. How much do you think social influence impacts house purchase decisions? How much your customers rely on your advice and comments?
  - a. If this answer differs by buyer segment, please specify by segment (for example: Recently Married/Young Families/ Empty Nesters)
16. Besides introducing the information of the house, how much do you see the role of social media in attracting your consumers? Do they come to you with some prior knowledge about the houses?

#### REALATORS OPINIONS

17. How interested are you in sustainable or energy efficient homes? Do you see the homebuyers interested in green homes?

18. What difficulties can you foresee when selling sustainable or energy efficient homes? What approaches, tools, and/or training do you think could facilitate your selling process?
19. Do you believe it is necessary for realtors to know about these types of homes, or is it not a mainstream part of the market?
20. Do you think that sustainable or energy efficient homes will become more popular in the future, or is it a fad that will pass?
21. Do you believe that sustainable or energy efficient homes sell for more money than traditional homes?
  - a. If so, do you believe that extra price is logical (reflective of added value)?
22. Do sustainable or energy efficient homes make financial sense, or would a buyer need to want to "save the world" to want to buy one?
23. Do you think that investing in sustainable or energy efficient improvements will provide homeowners with the features that will be demanded in the future?

## 8.3 Appendix C: Study 3 Research Documents

### 8.3.1 Consent Form



**Research Project Title:**

High vs Low Involvement: A comparison between ethical product decisions

**Investigators:**

You are asked to participate in a research study conducted by doctoral candidate Lianne Foti from the University of Bradford, School of Management.

**Purpose of the Study:**

The aim of the current research is to investigate the consumer decision-making process when purchasing ethical products and to identify factors that impact purchasing behaviour.

**Confidentiality:**

Every effort will be made to ensure confidentiality of any identifying information that is obtained in connection with this study. Your interview will be recorded on a password-protected device and downloaded within 24 hours to a password-protected computer in a locked office. You have the right to review/edit the tapes or transcripts.

An encrypted USB Key will be used to ship the recording to a trusted transcription company and a confidentiality agreement will be signed. After your interview has been transcribed, it will be analyzed in coded form.

Directly identifying information will be coded and the files along with the original audio files will be stored for at least 2 years past the publication of the final associated paper on an encrypted computer in a locked office. After this time, the files will be erased. Only Lianne Foti, Doctoral candidate, from the University of Bradford, School of Management will have access to the information.

**Rights of Research Participants:**

You may withdraw your consent at any time and discontinue participation without penalty. You are not waiving any legal claims, rights or remedies because of your participation in this research study. This study has been reviewed and received ethics clearance through the Research Ethics Board at the University of Bradford. If you have any questions regarding your rights as a research participant, contact:

The Research & Knowledge Transfer Support (RKTS) Department  
University of Bradford

Bradford

West Yorkshire

BD7 1DP

Email: [rkts@bradford.ac.uk](mailto:rkts@bradford.ac.uk)

Telephone: + 44 (0)1274 236000

**Questions:**

If you have any questions regarding this research project or this consent form, please contact Lianne Foti at 519-824-4120 ext. 56286 or by email at: foti@uoguelph.ca

**Signature of Research Participant:**

I have read the information provided for the study “High vs Low Involvement: A comparison between ethical product decisions” as described herein. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I agree to participate in this study. I have been given a copy of this form.

---

Name of Participant (please print)

---

Signature Date

### **8.3.2 Interview Questions-Consumers**

#### **Low Involvement Sustainable Consumption Interview Questions**

1. Why do you shop at the farmers' market?
2. How often do you shop at the farmers' market?
3. What do you purchase at the farmers' market?
4. What other places do you shop at to get your groceries?
5. In your opinion, what is the difference between shopping here vs. shopping at a larger grocery chain?
6. What items do you NOT purchase at the farmers' market, but do purchase elsewhere?
  - a. What are the reasons for shopping elsewhere?
7. Are there any specific attributes that you look for in produce that drives you to shop at the farmers' market?
8. Is purchasing local products important to you?
9. Is purchasing organic products important to you?
10. Is vendor relationship important to you?
11. Are you concerned about consuming certain types of food?
12. Do you trust the produce that is imported from other countries?
13. How do you feel after shopping at the farmer's market?
14. What do you do after you leave the farmers' market?
15. Do you feel a strong connection to the community when shopping at the farmer's market?
16. Do you share with others that you shop at the farmer's market?

### **8.3.3 Interview Questions-Vendors**

#### **Low Involvement Sustainable Consumption Interview Questions:**

1. For how long have you been selling at the farmers' market?
2. Why do you believe consumers come to the farmers' market?
3. How do consumers learn about your products?
4. What drives consumers to shop at your stall?
5. Do you sell strictly organic items? If so, why? If not, why?
  - a. Do you sell a variety of organic and non-organic produce items, or do you – some organic?
6. Do you sell strictly local produce items? If so, why? If not, why?
7. Do you think there are people that want to shop at a farmers' market but do not come here? If so, why do you think those consumers shop elsewhere?
8. How does the produce or items found at the farmer's market differ from produce or items at a larger grocery store?
9. Do you have any additional comments about the consumer decision-making process when they shop here at the market?
10. Do you have any questions or comments or anything you'd like to add?

Thank you.

## 8.4 Appendix D: Study 4 Research Documents

### 8.4.1 Participant Recruitment Letter

**Reid's Heritage Homes emailed the following script to sales representatives and real estate agents for participant volunteers for the thesis research:**

Lianne Foti, doctoral candidate from the University of Bradford, School of Management is undertaking research to investigate the consumer decision-making process associated with purchasing a home, and to identify the factors that impact purchasing behavior. This research will be approached predominately through qualitative methodology, utilizing interviews with Sales Representatives and Real Estate Agents.

The University requires volunteers to participate in an interview to assist in their research. The interview will take two hours and the meeting date and location will be arranged at a time and place that is most convenient for you. As a thank you for your support of their research efforts, each participant will receive a \$10 gift card to a coffee shop or grocery store. Only the University of Bradford researchers will know if you do or do not participate in this research, and every effort will be made to ensure confidentiality of identifying information that is obtained in connection with this study. For more information, please see the attached Consent to Participate in Research document for the study titled High vs Low Involvement: A comparison between ethical product decisions.

If you are interested in participating or have any questions regarding this request, please feel free to contact Lianne Foti, Doctoral Candidate, University of Bradford, School of Management, who will be conducting the interviews. She can be reached at (519) 824-4120 ext. 56286 or [lfoti@bradford.ca](mailto:lfoti@bradford.ca).

Thank you for your support.

Sincerely yours,

Jennifer Weatherston

Director of Estimating | Net Zero Project Manager | **Reid's Heritage Homes**  
6783 Wellington Road 34, RR 22, Cambridge ON N3C 2V4  
T: [519.658.6656](tel:519.658.6656) ext. 256 | | [jweatherston@heritagehomes.com](mailto:jweatherston@heritagehomes.com)



Modern Thinking. Timeless Values.

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2014 | Best Small and Medium Sized Employers

### **8.4.2 Consent Form**

#### **CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH**

**Research Project Title:**

High vs Low Involvement: A comparison between ethical product decisions

**Investigators:**

You are asked to participate in a research study conducted by doctoral candidate Lianne Foti from the University of Bradford, School of Management.

**Purpose of the Study:**

At this point, sustainable and energy efficient (SEE) housing in Canada is still a niche market. The goal of this research is to aid in the dispersion of information so that SEE can be part of the standard residential real estate conversation. The desire is to determine the most effective way to communicate the SEE housing information between and amongst the consumers, realtors, home builders (and their subcontractors and suppliers), and the governments, so that SEE housing can grow from a niche market to a commercially viable and necessary part of the conversation.

The aim of the current research is to investigate the consumer decision-making process when purchasing SEE homes and to identify factors that impact purchasing behaviour. This goal will be approached predominantly through qualitative methodology, utilizing interviews with Realtors and Sales Representatives that sell homes with a variety of features including sustainability and energy efficiency in Kitchener-Waterloo-Cambridge-Guelph (KWCG) in Southern Ontario, Canada. The research questions will be addressed through empirical research designed to further identify themes that constitute barriers to ethical consumption of high involvement SEE homes.

**Procedures:**

If you volunteer to participate in this study, we would ask you to do the following:

Contact Lianne Foti to arrange an interview time. Interviews can take place up to five weeks after you receive the invitation/email sent on behalf of Reid's Heritage Homes. You can only participate in one interview. Lianne Foti will pre-arrange with you a meeting place to conduct the interview. For your convenience, most interviews are anticipated to occur at your workplace, but the University of Guelph will also be made available for a meeting location if you prefer that option. Interviews are estimated to take 25 minutes each. Prior to the interview, the consent form will have been emailed to you for review. At the beginning of the meeting, Lianne Foti will walk through the consent form with you. The interview will then occur and it will be audio-recorded, not consenting to audio recording precludes participation.

The research findings will be made available to you and you will receive a copy of our results. Additionally, if training is developed based on the research results, you will be invited to attend.

If training occurs and you decided to attend, a second round of interviews will be arranged (approximately 1 year after the initial interview). The procedure for the



second interview will be the exact same as the first (described above). You will be given the option of declining to continue your contribution in the research if you so wish. The second interview will be very similar in format to the first, as the intention is to measure changes in your response.

**Potential Risks and Discomforts:**

Participation in this research will not pose any risk to your relationship with Reid's Heritage Homes. You will be asked about your familiarity with sustainable and energy efficient (SEE) home features. It is possible you could feel embarrassed for not knowing about these aspects. However, high levels of familiarity are not common and the only person observing your responses is the interviewer. If you feel it necessary, the interview can be terminated.

**Potential Benefits to Participants and/or to Society:**

Participants could learn of the importance of SEE home features, which could improve their job performance. This could occur both through the interview process, and also through future training, which may be made available to them.

Society will benefit as the research works toward the protection and preservation of the environment by disbursing and advancing information regarding SEE housing to four audiences. First, the government (at a variety of levels including municipal, provincial, and federal) may use this research to shape policy decisions. By knowing how consumers respond to a product (home), policy may be more effectively crafted to encourage the desired outcome and limit unintended consequences. Secondly, the homebuilding industry may use the research to inform them for their future offering decisions. By better understanding what a consumer desires, values, understands, and is willing to purchase, the industry can offer a SEE home which the consumer demands. Thirdly, Realtors and Sales Representatives will benefit from the suggested guidelines to more effectively communicate SEE home benefits to consumers. This may lead to increased SEE homes sales, and an expertise in a home sub-category, which will only grow in importance in the future. Lastly, homebuyers will indirectly benefit from changes made by governments, homebuilders, Realtors, and Sales Representatives. More effectively-targeted policy, the inclusion of SEE home features that matter the most to consumers, and the increased SEE knowledge of Realtors and Sales Representatives (which provide the home buying expertise to consumers) all increase the probability that a home buyer will strongly consider and possibly invest in a SEE home. In order to reach the goal of protecting and preserving the environment, this research will help alter the behavior of the first three groups in order to incentivize consumers to change their purchasing patterns to include SEE homes.

**Payment for Participation:**

You will receive a \$10 gift card to a grocery store or coffee shop as an incentive to encourage participation. You can withdraw from the interview at any point and you will still receive your gift card.

**Confidentiality:**

Every effort will be made to ensure confidentiality of any identifying information that is obtained in connection with this study. Your interview will be recorded on a password-protected device and downloaded within 24 hours to a password-protected

computer in a locked office. You have the right to review/edit the tapes or transcripts.

An encrypted USB Key will be used to ship the recording to a trusted transcription company and a confidentiality agreement will be signed. After your interview has been transcribed, it will be analysed in coded form.

Directly identifying information will be coded and the files along with the original audio files will be stored for at least 2 years past the publication of the final associated paper on an encrypted computer in a locked office. After this time, the files will be erased. Reid's Heritage Homes will not have access to any of the identifying information, nor will they be aware of whether or not you chose to participate. Only Lianne Foti, Doctoral candidate, from the University of Bradford, School of Management will have access to the information.

### **Participation and Withdrawal:**

You can choose whether to be in this study or not. If you volunteer to be in this study, you may withdraw at any time without consequences of any kind. You may exercise the option of removing your data from the study. You may also refuse to answer any questions you don't want to answer and still remain in the study. Although highly unlikely, the investigator may withdraw you from this research if extenuated circumstances arise that warrant doing so.

### **Rights of Research Participants:**

You may withdraw your consent at any time and discontinue participation without penalty. You are not waiving any legal claims, rights or remedies because of your participation in this research study. This study has been reviewed and received ethics clearance through the Research Ethics Board at the University of Bradford. If you have any questions regarding your rights as a research participant, contact:

The Research & Knowledge Transfer Support (RKTS) Department  
University of Bradford  
Bradford, West Yorkshire  
BD7 1DP  
Email: [rkts@bradford.ac.uk](mailto:rkts@bradford.ac.uk)  
Telephone: + 44 (0)1274 236000

### **Questions:**

If you have any questions regarding this research project or this consent form, please contact Lianne Foti at 519-824-4120 ext. 56286 or by email at: [foti@uoguelph.ca](mailto:foti@uoguelph.ca)

### **Signature of Research Participant:**

I have read the information provided for the study "High vs Low Involvement: A comparison between ethical product decisions" as described herein. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I agree to participate in this study. I have been given a copy of this form.

---

Name of Participant (please print)

Signature of Participant

Date

**Signature of Witness:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Witness (please print)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Witness

Date

### **8.4.3 Script**



#### **Understanding and Improving Decisions Regarding Sustainable and Energy Efficient (SEE) Homes**

Lianne Foti, Doctoral Candidate from the University of Bradford, School of Management will be the sole researcher conducting the interviews and will be adhering to the following steps:

##### **1. Respond to interested volunteers**

- Thank those who responded and send a copy of the consent form.
- Arrange a meeting place to conduct the interview. The most convenient location for the participant will be chosen.

##### **2. Interview process**

- Thank the participant and present them with the gift card.
- Walk through the consent form with the participant. Provide them with a hardcopy of the consent form.
- If approved, the interview questions will be recorded.

##### **3. Post interview**

2. Email research findings to participants once the project has been completed.

#### **8.4.4 Interview Questions-Consumers**

##### **High Involvement Sustainable Consumption Interview Questions:**

1. What do you look for when shopping for a home?
2. How many homes have you purchased in your life?
3. What type of features do you look for in a home?
4. Where do you get your information?
5. What attributes do you look for in a home?
  - a. What are the reasons for why you purchase these attributes?
6. Are there any specific attributes that you look for in produce that drives you to shop a home with sustainable or energy efficient features?
7. How heavily do you rely on the realtor for information regarding the home?
8. Are you concerned about the chemicals in a home?
9. Would you purchase a home with sustainable or energy efficient features?  
Why?
10. What would prevent you from purchasing a home with sustainable or energy efficient features?
11. Would you want people to know that your home has sustainable or energy efficient features?

#### **8.4.5 Interview Questions-Realtors**

##### **Interview Questions:**

###### **BASELINE**

1. According to your observation, what is the decision process of your buyers when purchasing a home?
  - a. What questions do they usually ask?
2. When you introduce a home to your customers, what is the information you present?
3. Who are your homebuyers? If you could segment the buyer market, how would you do that?
  - a. Can you identify which buyer segments respond to each feature? For example: Recently Married/ Young Families/ Empty Nesters. What percent of your customers is in each segment?

###### **BASELINE + GREEN**

4. According to your observation, what is the decision process of your buyers when considering a house with SEE features?
  - a. What questions do they usually ask?
5. Are consumers interested in the SEE features of a home?
  - a. If so, what's the percentage of your customers that care about this issue?
  - b. Who are these consumers?
  - c. Why do you think they ask you about this?
  - d. What are they asking?
6. When you introduce a house with sustainable or energy efficient features to your customers, what is the information you present? Could you please list items in order? (Which information you tend to give first, second, and so on.)
7. What buyer segment is interested in sustainable or energy efficient features?
8. What barriers prevent consumers from purchasing a home with sustainable or energy efficient features?

#### SOCIAL INFLUENCE

9. To what extent do you think social influence impacts house purchase decisions? Does this depend on demographic?

10. How much do your customers rely on your advice and comments?

#### REALATORS OPINIONS

11. How interested are you in sustainable or energy efficient homes?

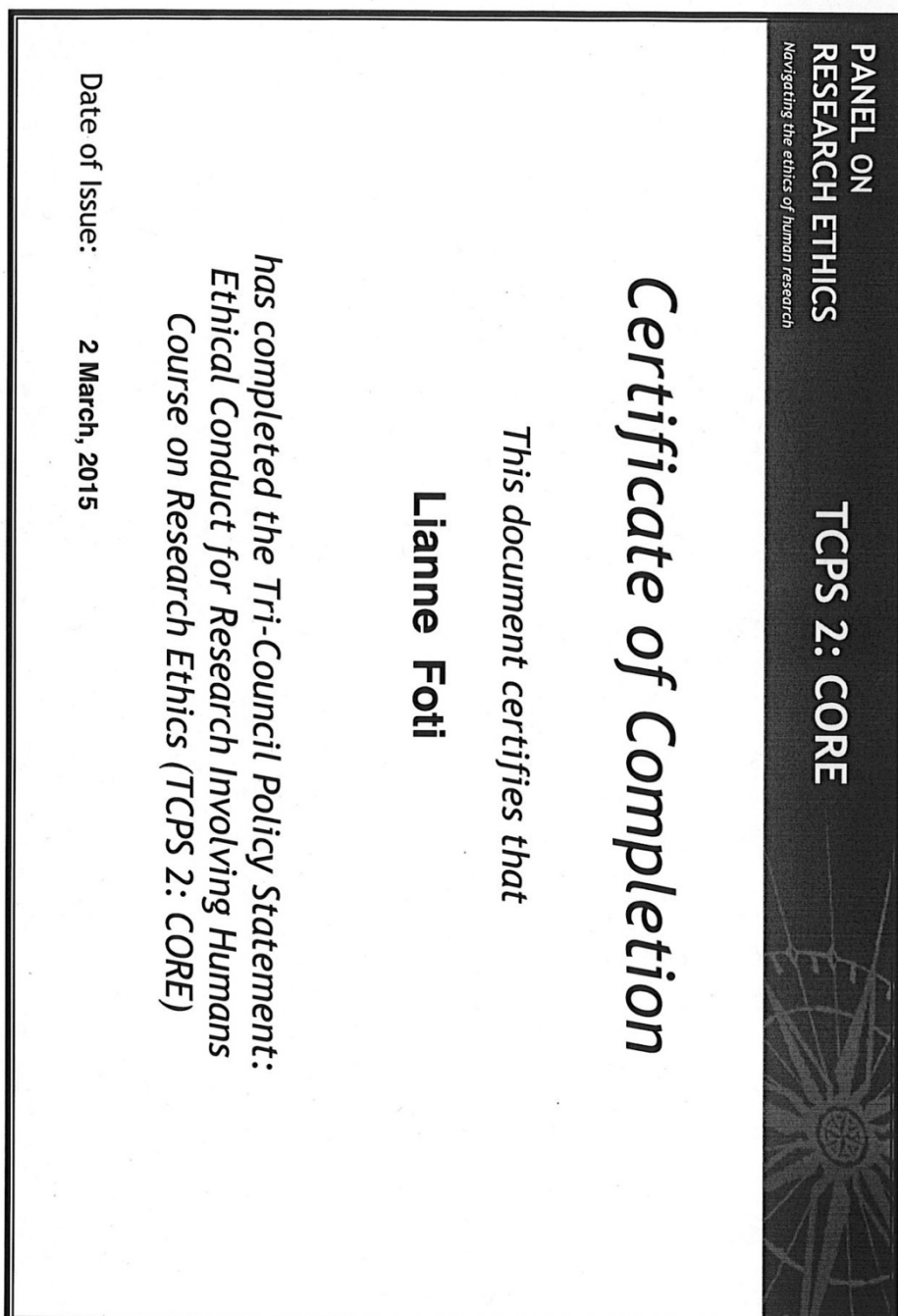
12. What challenges have you faced in selling homes with SEE features? What would help?

13. Is it necessary for realtors to know about SEE features in homes?

14. Do sustainable or energy efficient homes make financial sense?

15. Do you think that investing in sustainable or energy efficient improvements will provide homeowners with the features that will be demanded in the future?

## 8.5 REB Certificate





## 8.6 Observation Notes and Emerging Themes

Time	Observation	Coding
7:30-8:30am	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>At first, it was observed that people were rushing between 7:30am and 9:30am. Patrons outside already had bags full of items and were leaving the market to start their day early.</li> <li>It was a beautiful sunny day and people were mostly dressed in shorts and t-shirts. Some in long pants with t-shirts.</li> <li>Most booths were open but 4 or 5 vendors were still scrambling to finish opening and getting items out on display.</li> <li>The colours outside were vibrant – Approximately 10 booths were set up to sell, fruits, vegetables, and cut flowers. The majority of the produce stands were located outside.</li> <li>There was a clown making balloon art and painting children's faces.</li> <li>The hot apple cider doughnut stand was located at the entrance to the indoor market and the tasty fresh smell filled the indoor space as you entered.</li> <li>The indoor space is used as a hockey arena during the winter months. The market occupies the space as a temporary location for the summer months. It will move to a downtown strictly indoor space during the winter season. People would be familiar with the place as it is used by several from the community who come to watch their children play hockey and chat with fellow parents.</li> <li>Shoppers are both inside and outside milling around the booths and there is a lot of space to move around.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rushing in the morning</li> <li>Beautiful Day</li> <li>People seemed happy</li> <li>Not all booths were open on time.</li> <li>Produce looked fresh.</li> <li>Familiar space with a community friendly familiarity.</li> </ul>
8:30-9:30am	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>As this was the 4<sup>th</sup> time attending the market this summer, the researcher was greeted with</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>People are friendly</li> </ul>

	<p>friendly vendor faces that smiled and said, "Hello".</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• People appeared busy, but happy. Several people were sampling food items as they walked around. Biscuits, butter-tarts, hot doughnuts, gluten-free cookies, cinnamon-buns, fair trade coffee were all noticed in people's hands as they walked around looking at the various stalls.</li> <li>• Located in the center of the arena were park-benches. A coffee stand booth along with several food booths were located nearby.</li> <li>• Closer to 9:30pm people started to sit and enjoy their treats while talking with others.</li> <li>• After walking around with the natural flow of consumer traffic, the researcher located herself on one of the benches and observed for the following hour from that location in the centre of the market.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Several people enjoying food while they shopped.</li> <li>• Central sitting area</li> </ul>
9:30-10:30am	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• At first, it was noted that people were choosing to sit on the benches and take a break from their shopping to share in a conversation and enjoy a coffee or a treat with the friends that they seemed to have come with to the market.</li> <li>• Most vendors were wearing casual clothing and their dress matched their booths. Farmers selling produced often had plaid shirts on and vendors selling food had slightly more stylish clothing.</li> <li>• Most of the people were wearing very casual clothing. However, some more senior women were very well dressed having proper make-up and wearing several pieces of jewelry.</li> <li>• One senior, well-dressed woman came to the benches by herself and sat down with a coffee in her own personal china tea-cup (the booth</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• People were very social and taking their time with their daily shopping. Pausing for coffee and treats.</li> <li>• Casual dress was the norm.</li> <li>• Some senior women were very well dressed.</li> <li>• Coffee served in disposable cups.</li> </ul>

	<p>served coffee only in disposable cups).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• She stayed for about 20mins and then left to walk around the stalls and returned closer to 10:15am. However, this time she was greeted by several familiar faces, all who were happy to see each-other and were asking if some other friends were coming.</li> <li>• It was observed that this was a meeting place for friends.</li> <li>• It was also observed that compared to the morning hour, the pace seemed to slow down and people did not seem like they were rushing.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Central location was a meeting place for friends who arrived alone.</li> <li>• People come to socialize.</li> <li>• Pace among shoppers was slow</li> </ul>
10:30-11:30am	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Several people came and left the central eating area. Some with friends and others came on their own to meet-up with friends.</li> <li>• The observer could hear people introducing friends to each other and instant conversations would ignite among people who were strangers a minute prior to the introduction.</li> <li>• It was noted that the market became very busy at this time and also very loud. Packed with people and the food in their hands had changed to include not only sweet morning treats but also more savoury food items, like samosa's and local secured meat samples.</li> <li>• While observing people while they interacted with vendors, it was noted that they were often engaged in a short 'chit-chat'. People were often greeted by vendors and asked how they were doing. This was not always the case, but there was an obvious personal touch noted in the interaction among vendors and consumers.</li> <li>• Vendors pointed people in the right direction (to neighboring booths) when they recognized that customers were looking for</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Friendships and acquaintances were being formed.</li> <li>• Food was being eaten while people shopped.</li> <li>• Strong vendor consumer relationships existed.</li> <li>• Soft sell approaches were best when selling produce.</li> </ul>

	<p>something that they were not able to provide for them.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One booth vendor sent his daughter to take the patron to the correct booth.</li> <li>• There were a few vendors who seemed inexperienced and perhaps had just recently begun to attend the market. They appeared to be trying much harder to sell their product to customers; they were younger in age than the average vendor. These vendors did not appear as natural as the others. Their behaviours were sometimes painful to observe. It was noted that the relationships had not yet been established with customers and their hard sell approach was not helping to change that.</li> <li>• Customers seem to trust the vendors and rarely asked how much an item cost. Instead, they would point to the various items that they were interested in purchasing and then were told the price by the vendor. It was observed that trust was a very important component to the seller-buying exchange at the market.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vendors assisted other vendors in getting customers.</li> <li>• High level of vendor trust among customers</li> </ul>
11:30-12:30am	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The observer returned to the central benches for the final hour.</li> <li>• While listening to the various conversations around, it was noted that there were discussions that related to products and how they relate to one's health. Talk about organic and the harm that chemicals are causing to people were discussed, how you can't trust various companies, etc. It was interesting to note that a level of fear existed. A fear that seems to be developed from miscommunications along a supply chain. The shorter the supply chains the less perceived fear.</li> <li>• The observer was engaged in a few conversations and made note of</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consumers discussed issues and there was a sense of fear among consumers with the products that exist in Canada.</li> <li>• Discussions about what these 'unnatural' products are doing to peoples' health.</li> </ul>

	<p>the themes and beliefs among several consumers.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Many discussed how they could come to the market and buy everything organic for the week.</li> <li>• Having noticed and discussed with a few vendors, it is noted that very few vendors actually sell solely organic produce. Often it is fresh local, sometimes chemical free, but not always.</li> <li>• Several consumers discussed that the products were organic and superior, based on health attributes, than produce found in typical grocery stores.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Purchasing products directly from a farmer seemed to increase consumers' level of trust in the product.</li> </ul>
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## 8.7 Observation Themes

<p><b>Trusting Atmosphere</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Rushing in the morning</li> <li>-Beautiful Day</li> <li>-People seemed happy</li> <li>-Not all booths were open on time.</li> <li>-Several people enjoying food while they shopped.</li> <li>-Central sitting area</li> <li>-People paused for coffee and treats.</li> <li>-Casual dress was the norm.</li> <li>-Pace among shoppers was slow</li> <li>Familiar space with a community friendly familiarity.</li> <li>-People are friendly</li> <li>-People were very social and taking their time with their daily shopping.</li> <li>-Some senior women were very well dressed for the day.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Positive Produce Perception</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Produce looked fresh.</li> <li>-Food was being eaten while people shopped</li> <li>-Comments were made about the local and organic produce.</li> <li>-Visible signs stated “local”, “organic”, “chemical Free”, “We grow what we sell”.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Vendor Relationships</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Strong vendor consumer relationships existed.</li> <li>-Soft sell approaches were best when selling produce.</li> <li>-Vendors assisted other vendors in getting customers.</li> <li>-High level of vendor trust among customers</li> </ul>
<p><b>Misconceptions/Contradictions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Coffee served in disposable cups.</li> <li>-Consumers discussed about the organic produce at the market, although it was observed that only a limited amount of produce was actually organic.</li> <li>-The terms ‘local’ and ‘organic’ were used synonymously in discussions.</li> </ul> <p>The sign, “We grow what we sell”. Seemed to recognize the contradictions/confusions and addressed it.</p>	<p><b>Social Gathering</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Central location was a meeting place for friends who arrived alone.</li> <li>-People come to socialize.</li> <li>-Friendships and acquaintances were being formed.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Fear/Health Concern</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Consumers discussed issues and there was a sense of fear among consumers with the products that exist in Canada.</li> <li>-Discussions about what these ‘unnatural’ products are doing to people’s health.</li> <li>-Purchasing products directly from a farmer seemed to increase consumers’ level of trust in the product.</li> </ul>

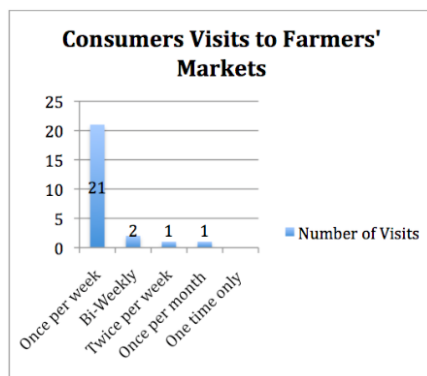
## 8.8 Survey Findings

A questionnaire was designed for conscious consumers who shop at the farmer's market. The following identifies driving factors that motivate consumers to buy produce at the market and other relevant findings. The answers appeared to be reliable as there was consistency among respondents based on the identified demographic. The questionnaire can be found in the appendix.

### Frequency of Visits and Number of Farmers' Markets Attended

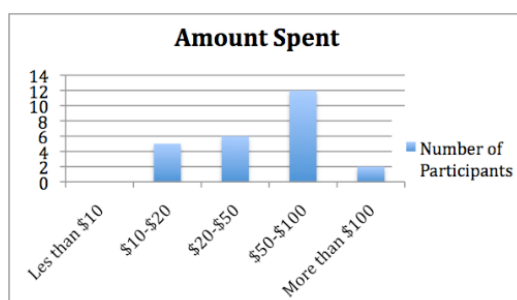
The survey results indicated that of the twenty-five respondents attending the farmers' market, the majority of respondents (84% or 21 respondents) said that they visited the market once a week during the season. All respondents had been to a farmers' market more than one time during the season.

### Frequency of Visits to Farmers' Markets



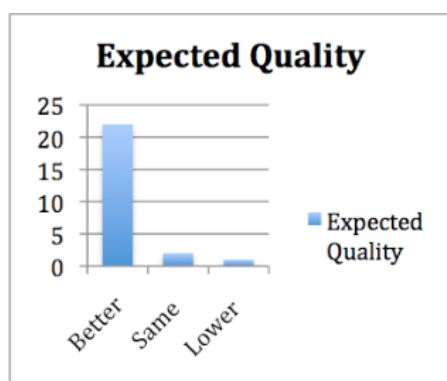
The average amount spent per visit at the farmers' markets ranged from \$10 to more than \$100. The following graph provides the distribution. The majority of respondents fell between the \$50-\$100 expenditure.

### Amount Spent by Consumers



Participants were asked questions on the expectations of price and quality compared to other retail facilities and the overwhelming majority (88 percent) indicated that they expected the quality of the produce sold at farmers' markets to be better than that at other retail facilities. Two (8%) anticipated it to be the same and only 1 (4%) expected the quality to be worse (Figure C). A significant number of participants (44%) believed prices to be higher at farmers' markets; 36 percent did not expect any difference in price and 12 percent anticipated lower prices at farmers' markets than at other facilities.

**Expected Quality**



**Expected Price**



In order to determine which characteristics play an important role when consumers decide to shop for their produce at the farmers' market, survey participants were asked to indicate how they would rate the following factors: available organic produce, available locally grown produce, vendor attitude, prices, hours of operation and location convenience. Participants were asked how they would rate the Guelph Farmers' Market Characteristics and were presented a 5 point Likert scale that ranged from 5= Excellent, 4= Very Good, 3=Good, 2=Fair, and 1=Poor. The results showed an overwhelming number of participants felt that vendor attitude was excellent or very good at the Guelph Farmers' Market (96%). The majority of participants thought that the amount of both organic produce was good or better (96%) and locally grown produce was very good or better (100%). Overall, all the characteristics on average received an above 'good' rating, however, price, hours of operation

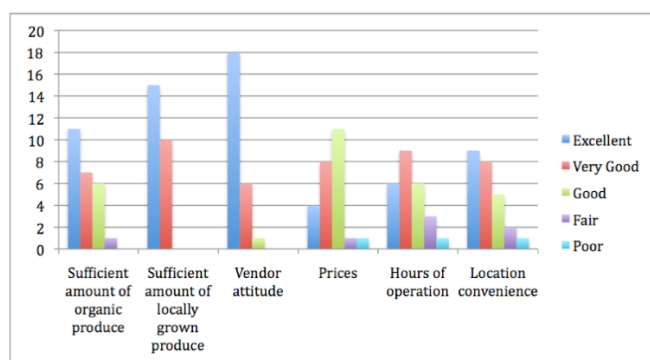


and location convenience did show some significant support as only fair or poor.

### Driving Factors for Shopping at the Market

Characteristics	Excellent	Very Good	Good	Fair	Poor
Sufficient amount of organic produce	44%	28%	24%	4%	0%
Sufficient amount of locally grown produce	60%	40%	0%	0%	0%
Vendor attitude	72%	24%	4%	0%	0%
Prices	16%	32%	44%	4%	4%
Hours of operation	24%	36%	24%	12%	4%
Location convenience	36%	32%	25%	8%	4%

### Driving Factors for Shopping at the Farmer's Market



Participants were then asked the reasons that they shop at the Guelph Farmers' Market and were presented a list of options with a 5 point Likert scale that they could rate them from 5=Very important, 4=Somewhat important, 3=Neutral, 2=Less Important, and 1=Least important.

## Reasons Consumers Shop at the Farmers' Market

Reasons for Shopping at the Farmers' Market	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Neutral	Less Important	Least Important
To buy items that are unique to the market	28%	40%	16%	8%	8%
To buy locally grown produce	88%	8%	4%	0%	0%
To buy organically grown produce	48%	32%	12%	0%	8%
To feel engaged with the community	52%	28%	16%	4%	0%
To fulfil part of my summer routine	24%	20%	24%	4%	28%
Other (please specify)	28%	0%	0%	0%	0%

Reasons listed under "other" were the following:

"Social aspect"

"Atmosphere"

"Meet my wonderful market friends!"

I feel safe knowing where my food is coming from.

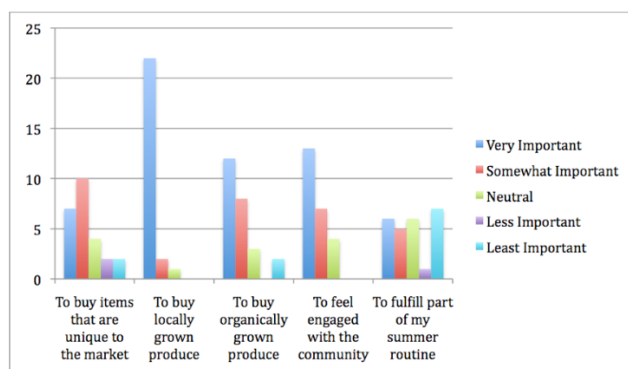
"It's tradition!"

"To buy food that tastes WAY better than the grocery store".

"To meet my friends and family"

"To fulfil my yearly routine"

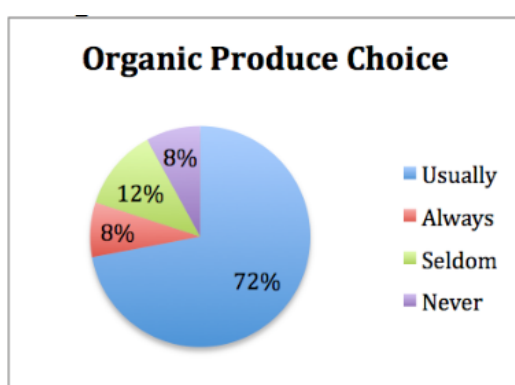
## Reasons Consumers Shop at the Farmers' Market



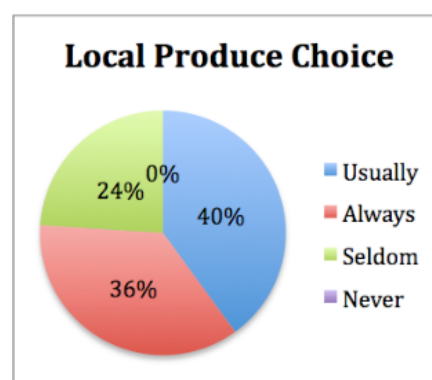
Organically and Locally Grown Fruits and Vegetable Consumption Choice

Consumers were then asked how often they chose organic fruits and vegetables for consumption. Results indicate that consumers choose both local and organic produce for consumption and both are very similar with organic always or usually be chosen 80% of the time and local produce always or usually being chosen 76% of the time.

#### Organic Produce Choice Influence



#### Local Produce Choice Influence

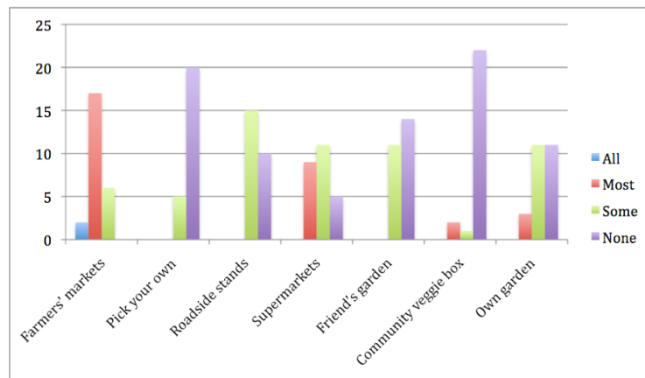


Of the survey participants, an overwhelming number stated that the availability of locally grown produce affects where they do most of their food shopping (80%).

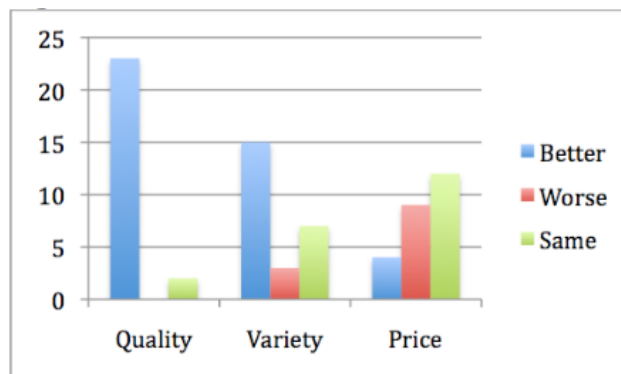
#### Where Consumers Purchased Produce

Type of Facility	All	Most	Some	None
Farmers' markets	4%	68	24%	0%
Pick your own	0%	0%	20%	80%
Roadside stands	0%	0%	60%	40%
Supermarkets	0%	36%	44%	20%
Friend's garden	0%	0%	44%	56%
Community veggie box	0%	8%	4%	88%
Own garden	0%	12%	44%	44%

## Location of Purchased Produce



## Perceived Value of Produce Purchasing Location



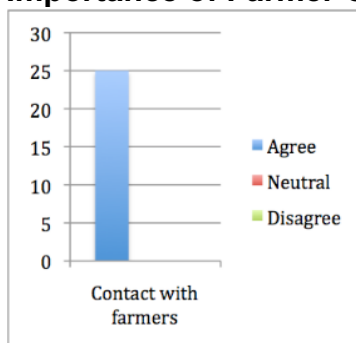
According to the results, all or most of the participants' produce was purchased at farmers' markets (76%) or at supermarkets (36%). The remaining produce purchased came from their own garden (12%), and community veggie box (8%). Participants were also asked to rate their produce expectation in terms of quality, variety and prices compared to other retail facilities. All participants expected quality to be the same or better at the farmers' market. Similarly, expected variety mostly was the same or better than other retail facilities (88%). Price was expected to be the same or worse (84%).

## How Consumers Feel About Farmers' Markets

In one section of the questionnaire, survey participants were asked to provide their opinions with respect to three different statements related to farmers' markets main objectives.

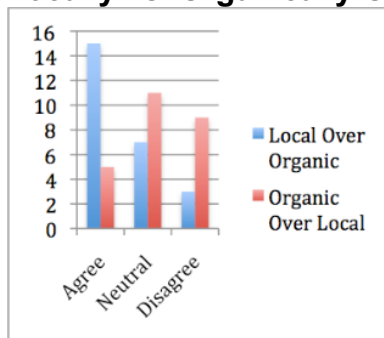
Freshness and direct contact with farmers are the main factors that drive people to Farmers' Markets. An overwhelming 100% of participants agreed that freshness and direct contact with farmers are the main factors that drive people to farmers' markets and not one participant disagreed with this statement.

### Importance of Farmer Connection



Participants were then asked if locally grown food was more important than organically grown food. Next, they were asked if organically grown food is more important than locally grown food. The majority of participants believed that organic was most important.

### Locally vs. Organically Grown



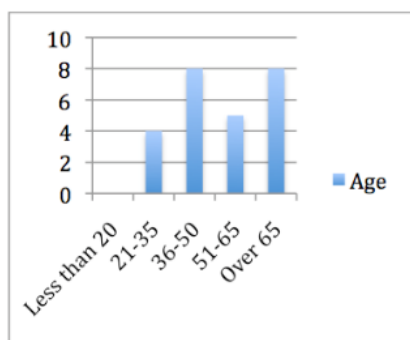
### Demographic Results –Section 2 of 2

Section 2 of the survey was designed to collect information on demographic and descriptive characteristics of the participants. Knowing the profile of participants is helpful when interpreting the data.

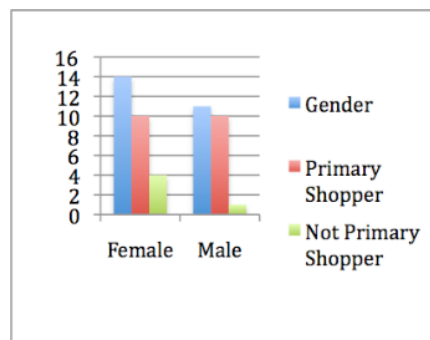
The majority of respondents were either between the ages of 36-50 or over 65 years of age. None of the participants fell under the age of 20. With regard to

gender, 11 identified themselves as male and 14 females. The majority of participants (80%) identified themselves as being the primary shopper of food in their household and 5 (20%) identified themselves as not being the primary shopper.

**Participant Age**

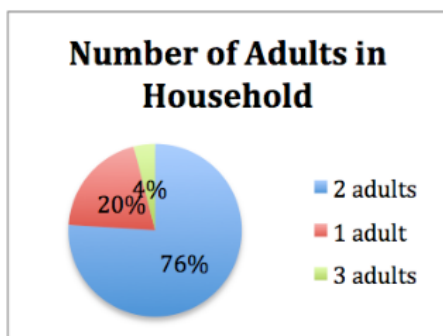


**Gender & Shopping Role**

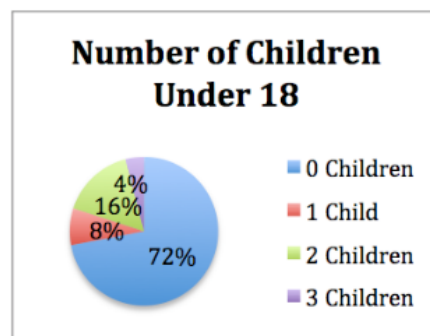


The average household size of participants was 2.28 individuals. Most surveys (19 out of 25) had two adults living in the household. Five participants lived in a household that consisted of only 1 adult and 1 participant's household consisted of 3 adults.

**Number of Household Adults**

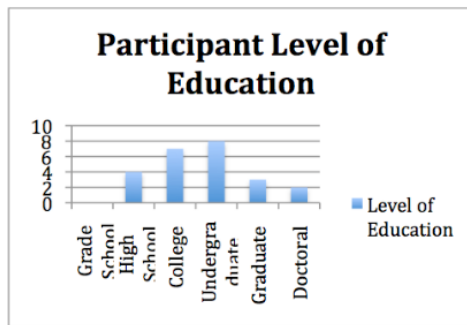


**Number of Children Under 18**



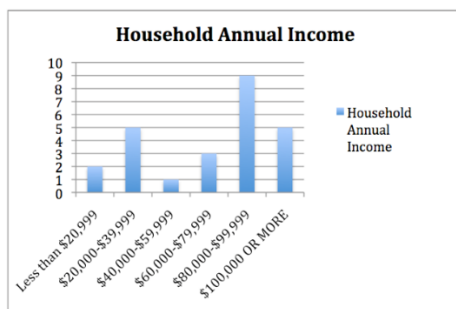
The majority of the respondents (32%) had graduated from university and held an undergraduate degree.

## Participant Level of Education



The annual household income of 8% of the respondents was less than \$20,999. The income of 20% made between \$20,000-\$39,999; 4% had a household income between \$40,000-\$59,000 and 12% made between \$60,000-\$79,999. Households with annual income of \$80,000-\$99,999 made up the largest representative income group (36%). The income of 20% made \$100,000 or more.

## Annual Household Income



## Household Income Impact on Decision-making

A cross analysis between household income and the reasons consumers shop at the farmers' market indicated that those who belonged to a lower household income, (less than \$39,999) identified tradition and safety/security as reasons for why they shop. These findings were not common in the literature.

## 8.9 Definitions of Terms

Term	Definition & Source
Knowledge translation	<p>"The exchange, synthesis and ethically-sound application of knowledge - within a complex system of interactions among researchers and users - to accelerate the capture of the benefits of research for Canadians through improved health, more effective services and products, and a strengthened health care system." Canadian Institutes of Health Research (<a href="http://www.cihr-irsc.gc.ca/e/29418.html">http://www.cihr-irsc.gc.ca/e/29418.html</a> accessed Jan 24, 2006)</p>
Knowledge transfer	<p>"The collaborative and systematic review, assessment, identification, aggregation and practical application of high-quality disability and rehabilitation research by key stakeholders (i.e., consumers, researchers, practitioners, policy makers) for the purpose of improving the lives of individuals with disabilities."<sup>19</sup> US National Center for the Dissemination of Disability Research (NCDDR)</p> <p>"a systematic approach to capture, collect and share tacit knowledge in order for it to become explicit knowledge. By doing so, this process allows for individuals and/or organizations to access and utilize essential information, which previously was known intrinsically to only one or a small group of people." Government of Alberta (<a href="http://www.pao.gov.ab.ca/learning/knowledge/transfer-guide/index.html">http://www.pao.gov.ab.ca/learning/knowledge/transfer-guide/index.html</a> accessed Jan 24, 2006).</p> <p>"Successful knowledge transfer involves much more than a one way, linear diffusion of knowledge and skills from a university to industry: it depends on access to people, information and infrastructure." UK Particle Physics and Astronomy Research Council (PPARC) (<a href="http://www.pparc.ac.uk/in/aboutkt.asp">http://www.pparc.ac.uk/in/aboutkt.asp</a> accessed Jan 24, 2006).</p> <p>"Knowledge transfer is about transferring good ideas, research results and skills between universities, other research organisations, business and the wider community to enable innovative new products and services to be developed." UK Office of Science and Technology (<a href="http://www.ost.gov.uk">http://www.ost.gov.uk</a> accessed Jan 24, 2006).</p>
Knowledge exchange	<p>"Knowledge exchange is collaborative problem-solving between researchers and decision makers that happens through linkage and exchange. Effective knowledge exchange involves interaction between decision makers and researchers and results in mutual learning through the process of planning, producing, disseminating, and applying existing or new research in decision-making." Canadian Health Services Research Foundation (<a href="http://www.chsrf.ca/keys/glossary_e.php">http://www.chsrf.ca/keys/glossary_e.php</a> accessed Jan 24, 2006).</p>
Research utilization	<p>"process by which specific research-based knowledge (science) is implemented in practice"<sup>20</sup></p>
Implementation	<p>"the execution of the adoption decision, that is, the innovation or the research is put into practice" (<a href="http://www.nursing.ualberta.ca/kusp/rustudy2/glossary.htm">http://www.nursing.ualberta.ca/kusp/rustudy2/glossary.htm</a> accessed Jan 24, 2006).</p>
Dissemination	<p>"The spreading of knowledge or research, such as is done in scientific journals and at scientific conferences." (<a href="http://www.nursing.ualberta.ca/kusp/rustudy2/glossary.htm">http://www.nursing.ualberta.ca/kusp/rustudy2/glossary.htm</a> accessed Jan 24, 2006)</p>
Diffusion	<p>"The process by which an innovation is communicated through certain channels over time among members of a social system"<sup>21</sup> (p5)</p>
Continuing education	<p>"Continuing Education for Health Professionals: planned educational activities intended to further the education and training of specific health professionals for the enhancement of practice, education, administration and research." Uniformed University Services for Health Sciences (<a href="http://www.usuhs.mil/che/definitions.htm">http://www.usuhs.mil/che/definitions.htm</a> accessed Jan 26, 2006)</p> <p>"Continuing education is a structured process of educating designed or intended to support the continuous development of pharmacists to maintain and enhance their professional competence. Continuing education should promote problem-solving and critical thinking and be applicable to the practice of pharmacy." (<a href="http://www.acpe-accredit.org/pdf/CEDefinition04.pdf">http://www.acpe-accredit.org/pdf/CEDefinition04.pdf</a> accessed Jan. 24, 2006)</p>
Continuing professional development	<p>"Continuing professional development is the process by which health professionals keep updated to meet the needs of patients, the health service, and their own professional development. It includes the continuous acquisition of new knowledge, skills, and attitudes to enable competent practice."<sup>22</sup></p> <p>"CPD...includes educational methods beyond the didactic, embodies concepts of self-directed learning and personal development and considers organizational and system factors."<sup>23</sup>(p10)</p>

Source: Graham, I. D., Logan, J., Harrison, M. B., Straus, S. E., Tetroe, J., Caswell, W., & Robinson, N. (2006). Lost in knowledge translation: time for a map?. *Journal of continuing education in the health professions*, 26(1), 13-24.